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Editorial Note



IN THE NOVEMBER 1984 issue of *Social Scientist* we had carried several articles on the stakes and activities of imperialism in different regions of the world. The current number complements that discussion by looking specifically at the economic aspects of imperialist penetration in one particular region, namely, South Asia. It does not, of course, deal with the details of involvement of metropolitan capital in the region, what it does is to look at the leverage on economic policy-making which imperialism, via agencies like the World Bank and the IMF, has acquired in some countries of this region, using the instrumentality of 'aid' and loans.

Looking at other South Asian countries is particularly important for us not just for the sake of familiarities with the happenings in one's own neighbourhood, but for a more basic reason as well. The economic policy regimes which exist elsewhere in South Asia bear a close resemblance to what the IMF, the World Bank and sections of domestic opinion would like to see instituted in India. As is well-known a fall-out of the capitalist crisis has been a tremendous intensification of pressures on Third World economies, many of which have passed, in varying degrees, into IMF tutelage to introduce an economic policy package ranging from trade liberalization and exchange rate adjustments, in a curtailment of subsidies, removal of domestic controls, solicitation of investment from multinational corporations and banks and even 'privatization' of the state sector. India has not remained immune to this pressure, and a powerful lobby has emerged even inside the country which stridently advocates the adoption of this policy package under the plea that this would generate substantial economic development. Since elements of this package have already been introduced elsewhere in South Asia, their experience should give us an inkling of the possible *denouement* that may be in store for us should we adopt this policy package. It should also be instructive for unravelling the constituent elements of the conjuncture which brings about such an 'opening up' of the economy for metropolitan capital.

We are glad, therefore, to be able to publish case studies of two of the countries of the region, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, by distinguished radical scholars belonging to the countries in question. The case studies of course do not address themselves to the same set of questions. But each sketches in its own way the trajectory of development which the particular country has followed, and this should be of interest to Indian readers. While the lead article by W D Lakshman recapitulates Sri Lanka's changing economic policy,

which accompanied the changing relationship with imperialist countries and agencies like the Bank and the Fund through the tenures of the successive governments in the island, Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad brings out vividly the abject dependence of the Bangladesh economy on foreign 'aid' and the social underpinnings of this dependence. The social support which imperialism can garner inside India for its intensified efforts at penetrating the economy is the object of investigation in C P Bhambhri's paper; his distinction between established big business houses which have an ambiguous relationship with imperialism and second-layer capitalists, who are much less averse to teaming up as junior partners with metropolitan capital is noteworthy and should provoke discussion.

Partha Chatterjee's communication in response to the review article on *Subaltern Studies II* by a group of young Delhi University scholars, which we had published in *Social Scientist* No. 137, carries forward an important theoretical discussion which was initiated in the pages of this journal some time ago. And in keeping with our tradition of chronicling actual struggles of 'subaltern groups', we publish a note on the Jantia rebellion against colonial administration.

Finally, this number contains an obituary note on Sharacchandra Mukubodh, an important Marathi writer though less well-known than his brother, Gajanan Madhav Mukubodh, the noted Hindi litterateur. Sharacchandra Mukubodh, though perhaps not a Marxist, was considerably influenced by Marxist ideas and wielded his pen not only as a creative writer, but also as a critic at a crucial juncture in Marathi literature. It is only appropriate that *Social Scientist* should recall the contribution of a man who stood aloof and alone in struggling according to his own light against certain bourgeois literary trends.

W D LAKSHMAN*

*The IMF-World Bank Intervention in Sri Lanka
Economic Policy : Historical Trends and Patterns*

INTERVENTIONS of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), more commonly known as the World Bank (WB), in domestic policy in Sri Lanka has a history of about three decades, going back to the first WB economic mission to the country in 1951. This history was, however, not one of continuous intensification of this interventionism. The discontinuities here were related closely to the changes in the balance of power in domestic politics. In referring to these policy changes we refer in what follows, to the two main political parties in Sri Lanka which, often in coalition with others, alternated in forming governments, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). The most extensive as well as the most intensive presence of the IMF and the WB in domestic policy scene, admitted even by policy-makers themselves, both political and administrative, can be seen in the current phase of Sri Lankan development, beginning with the change of regime in 1977.

This paper examines the historical trends pertaining to IMF-WB interventionism in Sri Lanka with the objective of understanding the economic and political background to the emergence of the current overwhelming position of these two institutions in the domestic policy scene. It attempts to identify the main areas of this intervention in the backdrop of the relevant historical trends. The quantitative analysis of the economic impact of the IMF-WB interventionist measures after 1977 is outside the scope of the present paper and has been discussed elsewhere.

In the following pages reference is often made to a distinctive combination of economic policy measures by the brief title of either "IMF stabilisation package or prototype IMF policies". Broadly speaking, the so-called IMF stabilisation package, tried out in many Third World countries generally with the assistance of also the WB, intends promoting growth and stability within an essentially free market, private enterprise, capitalist system. Following Cheryl Payer (1974) the full IMF stabilisation package may be regarded as being composed of the following elements:

- (a) currency devaluation or depreciation (or the selection of a "realistic" exchange rate)
- (b) import/exchange liberalisation
- (c) multilateralism in foreign trade
- (d) restrictive monetary management
- (e) restrictive fiscal management
- (f) restraint in granting wage/salary increases
- (g) decontrol measures and promotion of the market mechanism and
- (h) promotion of private capital, domestic as well as foreign

The following pages are intended to show how selected combinations of these measures came to be imposed on the governments of Sri Lanka at different times of its post-independence era. The IMF package in its most complete form, that is, in terms of the country's own historical experience in this regard, has been seen in operation since 1977, although even today, some of the elements in this package are conspicuously absent in the Sri Lankan strategy.

Sri Lanka at Independence

The economic structure inherited by Sri Lanka at its political independence in 1948 was the result of the introduction of "capitalist"¹ forms of organisation into certain economic activity areas during the colonial period while the bulk of the economy continued to remain pre-capitalist. In a predominantly agricultural economy, agricultural production for export contributed about one-third of the GDP in the early 1950's. The importance of the export agricultural sector was not confined to its direct contribution to output and employment. A substantial part of the service sector, particularly commerce, finance and transport, derived its major support from the export agricultural sector. Export processing activities connected with the plantation crops also made up the bulk of manufacturing activities. Through its influence on government finances, the export sector also affected the volume and the composition of government expenditures. The necessary corollary of the heavy export-dependence was the equally heavy reliance on imports for consumer and capital goods requirements of the country. In the early 1950's imports of goods and services amounted to 36 per cent of the GDP.

The exports of the country at independence were heavily concentrated in three agricultural products—tea, rubber and coconut. In 1948, they constituted 94 per cent of exports of Sri Lankan produce. The Gini-Hirschman coefficient of commodity concentration of exports in 1948 works out to 66 per cent, indicating, on the basis of Michaely's calculations for a large number of countries (Michaely, 1962, pp. 11-12), a relatively high degree of commodity concentration.

The growth of export agriculture and the expansion of commercial and

other service activities had the effect of increasing the proportion of the population engaged in non-food production. Non-export agriculture, neglected during the colonial period and continuing to suffer from various problems causing low productivity, was unable to produce a surplus of food to feed the increasing non-food-producing population. Sri Lanka's imports thus came to be heavily concentrated on foodstuffs. What is more, the bulk of these food imports, 91 per cent in 1948-50, was made up of essential items—rice, wheat flour, pulses, curriestuffs, fish products, milk products and sugar. These, together with other consumer items, formed 73 per cent of the country's imports in 1948-50, intermediate goods were 17 per cent and investment goods, 10 per cent.

Although some form of "capitalist" organisation took root in certain sectors of the economy like plantations and selected service sector activities, the colonial economy did not produce the necessary conditions for an organic development of capitalism on a wide front. The capitalist sectors came to be dominated by foreign private capital, either directly through equity holdings in companies engaged in domestic productive activity (e.g. Sterling Companies in the plantations sector) or indirectly through management control via foreign-owned companies like Agency Houses. As in the case of other colonial economies, the surpluses generated in Sri Lanka too were largely sent abroad, leaving very little for further accumulation domestically. The bulk of the economy which remained pre-capitalist and of low productivity, on the other hand, was not in a position to generate any significant investible surplus. It may be noted here that this large pre-capitalist sector included not only peasant sectors in paddy, and other non-export crops, handicrafts and cottage industries, but also a fair proportion of the export crops sector which was in small holdings. In terms of acreage ownership, small holdings dominated the coconut sector, and were equally important as estates within the rubber sector.

With the passage of time, there was, no doubt, some development and accumulation of domestically-owned capital. But it retained a dependent and merchant character and was invested in bulk within plantations, trade and other service activities. As in the case of colonial economies in similar conditions, in Sri Lanka too, the free trade policy effectively prevented any significant industrial accumulation. Thus when, during the Second World War for example, imports of industrial goods had to be drastically cut for war-related reasons, private capital failed to invest in industry, making the state fill in the so created gap (Amarasinghe, 1979). State capitalism in industry during the war period, however, was a temporary phenomenon. The termination of hostilities and the gradual return to normalcy in external trade flows prevented further expansion in state or private capitalism in industry. As will be seen in the following section, the intervention of the World Bank in the early 1950's led to a gradual process of the state's disengagement from industrial activity.

On a request made by the government of Sri Lanka in mid-1951, the WB organised "an over-all mission" to survey the development potentialities of

the country" and to provide "advice on the development programme to be drawn up for the six year period" (from October 1, 1953) (IBRD, 1953, p xi). Having arrived in Sri Lanka in October 1951, the Mission remained in the country till December 1951. Its report published in 1953 ran into 807 pages (without the index) and was in two parts, Part One (seven chapters) on an overall programme of development and Part Two (twelve chapters) on selected fields of development. The development thinking and strategy embodied in the report of this WB almost *in toto* embodied in the Six Year Programme of Investment the Government adopted in 1955 (Government of Ceylon, 1955). The pledge given by the President of the World Bank in the letter of transmittal of the Report that "the Bank will follow with interest the action taken in connection with the Report, and will be prepared, if desired by the Ceylon Government, to discuss any questions arising from it, and to consider how the Bank can best help in the future development of Ceylon" (IBRD, 1953, p vii) had gone a long way to persuade the government to attempt implementation of the board sweep of the Mission's recommendations during 1952-56. The change of government in 1956, however, made this only a short-lived phase in WB involvement² in Sri Lankan domestic policy.

It is not possible to do justice to as large a work as the IBRD report of 1953 within a couple of pages. Such a summary presentation is bound to oversimplify and misrepresent the views of the Mission to some extent. Having said that one may note that the Mission interpreted some aspects of the economic policy of the early 1950's in a very favourable light.

Immediately after end of the war, the Ceylon Government commenced a programme of accelerated capital investment and development. This accelerated development has been paid for without in any way threatening the financial stability of the country. That this is so is due to the sound policies in the monetary field and to the prudent and skillful handling of the government budget. Thanks to (these) policies and to reasonably favourable export markets, the development expenditure has been entirely covered by net surpluses of revenue over ordinary expenditure plus receipts from internal loans, and the external costs of development have been met without significant reduction of external exchange reserves (IBRD, 1953, p 16-7).

Sri Lankan economic conditions during the time of the Mission's stay in the country were influenced in an unusually favourable manner by the Korean War boom in primary commodity prices. There were large trade surpluses. Accumulated reserves were sufficient to procure almost one full year's import requirements. Government revenues which depended heavily on customs duties increased sharply thereby producing current account surpluses in the government budget.³ Assisted by boom conditions in export markets, the government was already moving away from quantitative restrictions on imports and exchange payments on current account (Lakshman, 1973, ch 6). Thus there was no need for the WB Mission of 1951 to specifically press for a programme of trade liberalisation in its recommendations. Since the domestic currency had been devalued already in 1949 by a

substantial margin and the external economic conditions were generally favourable, the Mission did not consider it necessary to press for any further rupee devaluation. Trade liberalisation and exchange devaluation are favourite measures in the prototype IMF-WB policy package as noted in the introductory section, but their absence from the recommendations of the WB Mission of 1951 to Sri Lanka is quite understandable in the context of the economic environment of the country at the time.

Some of the other elements common to this prototype package were, however, present among the recommendations of the Mission:

- 1 Government policies should be such as to encourage investment of private capital, both Ceylonese and non-Ceylonese (p. 120)
- 2 While active government sympathy and encouragement of industrial development is of the first importance, direct government management of factories should be avoided. A genuine partnership with private enterprise should be the objective (P. 126-127)
- 3 Policies and measures of maintaining internal monetary stability should be continued (p. 122)
- 4 The machinery of budget control should be strengthened, in order to insure that as large as possible a surplus of revenue over recurrent expenditure is available for capital investment (p. 122)
- 5 Food subsidies should be eliminated gradually over the next few years (p. 123)

Within a policy framework aimed at achieving monetary and fiscal stability, the Mission recommended an investment programme for growth, which could be financed through non-inflationary sources. On sectoral priorities, the Mission emphasised the need for agricultural growth and for development of infrastructure for promoting private initiative. It recommended that "industrial development policy should aim at the promotion of initially small industries which will contribute to the spread of industrial techniques and know how as a basis for later growth, rather than at the undertaking of single large projects making heavy demands on the still restricted capital, technical and managerial resources available" (p. 126).

The recommendations of the WB Mission of 1951, taken as a whole, were intended to promote private capitalism in the country within the broad economic and social structure which then existed. It was the same type of dependent capitalism cultivated by British colonialism in Sri Lanka that received the support of the WB Mission. No change in the structural significance of plantation agriculture which depended on external markets was envisaged. The largely peasant character of non-export agriculture was to continue. No measures were recommended to spread the capitalist mode of production into this sector, so that forces of production in it would develop rapidly. Introduction of industrial capitalism on a wide front was discouraged so that the country would continue to be dependent on foreign sources for technology and a wide variety of industrial goods. Foreign capital dominance of the economy would have continued unabated under these

recommendations or would have even become greater. The significance of the building up of a national bourgeoisie for self-reliant capitalist development was not recognised by the Mission and within the policy framework proposed, the merchant character of the existing domestic capitalist class would have continued, thereby strengthening the existing dependent relationships.

The existing regime, representing as it did the interests of the foreign and the local bourgeoisie, had accepted the WB Mission's recommendations in their broad outline. A comparison of the six-year (1953-59) programme of government development expenditure proposed by the Mission, with the six-year (1954/55-1959/60) investment programme adopted by the government subsequently (see Table 1) shows a very close correspondence between the relevant sectoral priorities. The Six Year Programme of Investment, it is true, was not strictly implemented. Even if its strict implementation was an objective of the government, it did not have the chance of carrying it through to its terminal year, because of the change of government in 1956. Yet the close correspondence between this Programme and the Mission's proposals is a clear indication of the latter's influence on domestic policy during 1953-56.

Table 1—Six Year Development Programme to be Financed
from Government Budget

Sector (a)	Percentages of Total Proposed Expenditure	
	As proposed by WB Mission for 1953-59	As Adopted by Government for 1954/5-1959/60
Agriculture and Allied Activities	28.8	36.5
Power	13.1	11.5
Industry	4.7	4.4
Transport	26.9	21.6
Health	12.2	4.7
Education	9.1	5.8
Rural Development	3.8	2.3
Administration & Other	1.6	13.2
Total (Rs. million)	1600	2529

Note (a) Classification of sectors is according to that of the Mission. The Six Year Programme of Investment adopts a different classification of broad sectors. Items compared here are made as comparable as possible by reclassifying the detailed items given in the programme into Mission's broad sectors. A certain degree of non-comparability remains because the items included in the "Administration and Other" sector within the two sources are not uniform.

Sources: IBRD, 1953 and Government of Ceylon, 1955.

WB interventionism became quite evident in two specific areas of implementation in particular, and this was also widely discussed at the time. The first was the gradual closure of a number of public sector industrial ventures started during the Second World War. The second, which was politically and socially more important than the former, was the elimination of food subsidies in 1953. The regime in power acted even more drastically than was recommended by the Mission. While the latter proposed a "gradual" withdrawal of consumer subsidies, the government tried to eliminate them totally in 1953.⁴ Since the expenditure on account of these subsidies was a large element in government current expenditure, their withdrawal resulted in a large increase in government savings, from an average of 13.2 per cent of government revenue in 1951/2—1952/3 to 34.5 per cent in 1953/4—1955/6. The grave social hardships caused by the withdrawal of food subsidies naturally produced a violent social reaction in 1953, later on in 1956 becoming one of the main factors which brought down the existing regime.

A Period of Minimum IMF-WB Interventionism, 1956-65.

After the government change of 1956⁵ there comes a period of about 10 years during which very little is heard about IMF-WB influences in the Sri Lankan policy scene. Although the Sri Lankan government received a small loan from the World Bank in the mid-fifties, foreign capital inflow on official account had not become a critical factor in Sri Lankan policy making at the time of the 1956 political change. By the end of 1955 and 1956 the country had external assets amounting respectively to 78 per cent and 76 per cent of annual imports and generally speaking, payments difficulties had not yet become the major development bottleneck which it became later on. This had apparently created hopes within the new regime that it could adopt a reasonably independent development strategy wherein undue influences from foreign donor countries and international financial institutions could be minimised. Subsequent developments had, however, shown that this was sheer wishful thinking, not at all based on any realistic projections of external economic conditions.

External developments after the mid-fifties were extremely unfavourable for Sri Lanka. Commodity terms of trade (1978=100) consistently deteriorated from a high of 203 in 1955 to 142 in 1965.⁶ The trade balance, which was in surplus during 1954-56, turned into a deficit in 1957 and continued to be in deficit in subsequent years so that the cumulative deficit for 1957-65 amounted to Rs 1,176 million (7 per cent of cumulative export earnings of the period).⁷ The deficits on the current account of the balance of payments were generally higher than trade deficits. Private capital inflows in net terms were either negative or, if positive, of small magnitude. There were some inflows of capital on official account⁸ but the major burden of financing payments deficits was borne by the country's external assets. They dropped to 21 per cent and 14 per cent of annual imports in 1965 and 1966 respectively.

These unfavourable external developments brought into sharp focus the vulnerability and the weakness of the classical export economy and the socio-economic system based thereon. Export earnings, heavily dependent on a few primary commodities of weak market prospects, grew very sluggishly, just by 14 per cent over the whole period from 1957 to 1965. But within an environment of income and population growth, a relatively free operation of market forces would have pushed up imports to unmanageable heights. Between 1955 and 1959, for example, whilst exports dropped by 6 per cent, imports rose by 32 per cent. This was because the process of liberalisation of imports and exchange payments, begun in the early 1950's, was continued into the second half of the decade, despite the reversal of export market trends around 1955 on the one hand, and the change of government in 1956, on the other. By the end of 1959, the volume of external assets came down to a very low level—33 per cent of annual imports—causing concern among policy makers.

The natural policy response to this adverse situation in the country's external economy was the imposition of quantitative restrictions on imports and exchange payments in an attempt to contain exchange outflow within manageable limits. Thus a closed economy was built up within a gradually tightening control regime. The impetus this had given to industries producing substitutes for the restricted imports was further strengthened by various fiscal and other promotional measures.

It may be noted here that the regime which came into power in 1956 had a different ideological position from the previous regime, with respect to priorities as between industry and agriculture in the country's development strategy. This can be seen from a comparison of investment proportions allocated for industry in the Six Year Programme of Investments of 1954/55—1959/60 and the Ten Year Plan of 1959-68. Unlike the former which covered governmental investment outlays only, the latter was intended to be a macro plan covering both the public and the private sector. Within the proposed plan of government investment of 1959-68, 23 per cent was allocated to agriculture, irrigation and fisheries and 24 per cent to manufacturing industry (National Planning Council, 1959, p. 78). In the Programme of 1954/55—1959/60 (Table 1) the corresponding proportions were 36.5 and 4.4 per cent respectively. In the Ten Year Plan, moreover, the overwhelming bulk of the government's industrial investments was intended to be channelled into large scale industry which was clearly discouraged by the WB Mission of 1951, and on its advice, the then government of Sri Lanka. Thus even without the pressures created by unfavourable external developments, the regimes of 1956-65 would have adopted a relative priority rating between industry and agriculture different from that of previous regimes. But the pressures from unfavourable external developments prevented them from formulating an autonomous strategy of industrial development. The path of industrial development since 1960 was therefore carved out by the nature of the control regime which emerged as the direct result of growing payment difficulties.

Although the control regime provided market conditions conducive to the establishment and growth of import substituting industry, the domestic capitalist class which had emerged through the previous colonial pattern of development was not in a position to take up the challenge of domestically producing the wide range of industrial articles which had come under the axe of the import controller. They lacked the necessary experience in industrial entrepreneurship, the volume of capital they could mobilise was inadequate, their technological capabilities were restricted and/or the degree of risk involved in industrial investments was for them too high. Due to this lack of a well developed national industrial bourgeoisie and the relative inhospitality of the existing political climate to any fresh inflows of direct foreign investments, the needed import substituting industrial investments necessitated the expansion of state capitalism during this period (Lakshman, 1981). In addition, state capitalism expanded into various non-manufacturing activities as well as fishing, construction, omnibus transport, port cargo handling, banking, insurance etc (Lakshman, 1979, pp. 205-9). The establishment of some public enterprises in non-manufacturing sectors followed the take-over of private enterprises. But the most widespread practice was for the state to take up an entrepreneurial role by establishing public enterprises either to undertake activities which were not previously undertaken by private enterprise or to compete with existing private enterprises.

The above policy framework, it appears, was not at all favourably viewed by international capitalism and its institutional agents, the IMF and the WB. Although the regimes of 1956-65⁹ carried out certain nationalisations of private property, it would be a mistake to interpret these nationalisations as attempts made to eliminate private capitalism. But the governments in the West and international capitalism in general made this mistake and viewed these regimes as hostile to capitalism at home, and also opposed, in their international relations, to the Western bloc of countries. With international finance capital thus boycotting them, these regimes had naturally to turn to countries in the Socialist bloc in order to obtain the needed financial and technological assistance. Thus a large number of state industrial ventures came to be established under aid programmes with Socialist countries. This clearly worsened the misunderstandings of the West about the character of these regimes and made their attitude even more unfriendly.

The preceding paragraphs present some of the main factors which appear to have made IMF-WB interventionism minimal in Sri Lanka during 1956-65. On the whole, foreign capital inflow into the country during this period remained extremely low. The relevant items extracted from the balance of payments tabulations are summarised in Table II. Transactions with the IMF recorded an outflow for 1956-60. The inflow recorded in transactions with the IMF for 1961-65 represented drawings on the gold tranche and the early credit tranches (Minister of Finance, 1970, p. 6) and therefore did not involve conditionality.

Table II—Cumulative Foreign Capital Inflow (Net) into
Sri Lanka, Three Five Year Periods 1956-1970

	Rs million except last 2 Rows		
	1956-60	1961-65	1966-70
(1) Official transfers	207	262	258
(2) Direct Foreign Investments	-81	-4	-44
(3) Other Private Capital	16	-21	-33
(4) Loans to Central Government	114	253	1314
(5) Liabilities of Banking Sector	3	-23	526
(6) Transactions with IMF	-50	167	360 ^a
Above Total	209	634	2381
% of Cumulative Exports	2.4	7.2	25.8
% of Cumulative Imports	2.3	6.7	21.0

Note (a) Includes an SDR allocation of Rs 78 million recorded for 1970

Source Central Bank Reports

During the first half of this ten-year period foreign capital inflows on both private and official accounts were as low as 2.4 per cent of exports and 2.3 per cent of imports. Deficits incurred on trade and current accounts were financed essentially through running down previously accumulated reserves. Reserves dropped to dangerously low levels by the end of the fifties. The regime in power therefore had to resort to larger volumes of foreign grants and loans during the first half of the 1960's. Thus foreign capital inflow rose to 7.2 per cent respectively of exports and imports during this period. It would be even more revealing if a breakdown of the capital inflow data in Table 2 into country sources were available. The source cited does not provide such a breakdown but general knowledge about the patterns of foreign capital inflow during this period leads one to guess that a large proportion of this inflow, particularly on official account, was from Socialist sources. This phenomenon and the widely used socialist rhetoric of the period together probably worsened the condition of indifference, if not actual hostility, on international capitalism towards Sri Lanka. Naturally the IMF-WB activities in the country's economic scene during 1956-65 were relatively negligible.

Re-emergence of IMF-WB Interventionism

The control regime of 1956-65 came up against a severe foreign

exchange crisis by the end of that period. It reached the virtual end of the road of import and exchange controls. As the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs during 1965-70 argued " . there were difficulties in adapting the administration of control to the smooth flow of supplies even in respect of items where allocations were in accordance with requirements. (There were) uncertainties and intermittent disturbances in supplies. (The) curtailment and the rationing of raw materials requirements for industry implied that existing capacity was being underutilised and that output and employment were below what they could be ... (M)ost important, economic development through the expansion of productive capacity was barred " (Corea, 1971, pp. 29-30). In addition, the usual inefficiencies of import-substituting industrialisation under heavy protection gradually came into sharp focus. The social discontent which all this aroused resulted in a change of regime in 1965, a change from an SLFP-dominated regime to a UNP-dominated one.

The major element of the strategy the new regime adopted to get over the impasse was to depend heavily on foreign aid. An Aid Ceylon Group was established under the auspices of the World Bank and larger volumes of foreign aid began flowing into the country, particularly from the West. It may be noted here in passing, that there were clear swings in the attitudes of the international financial community towards Sri Lanka along with the swings in the domestic political see-saw. The UNP-dominated regimes were strongly favoured in preference to SLFP-dominated ones, irrespective of the fact that both were trying to perpetuate the basic capitalist structure of the economy. The difference of the two political parties as far as international capitalism was concerned probably was that the SLFP's capitalist strategy depended more heavily on the promotion of a national industrial bourgeoisie than the UNP's, although doubts can be expressed as to whether these political parties had well-articulated ideological positions regarding this issue. Whatever it may be, these changing attitudes of the international financial community towards the regimes in power in Sri Lanka produced a vicious circle of events, particularly since 1965—a period of more favourable attitudes witnessing a heavier inflow of foreign aid, leading to greater interventionism by world financial institutions and donor countries, leading to capitulation of the regime to varying degrees, producing further inflows of foreign aid, thereby strengthening the interventionist factors.

Beginning with the domestic political changes and the organisation of the Aid Group in 1965 there was a stepping up of the rate of inflow of foreign capital on both official and private accounts (Table II). During 1966-70 as a whole, this amounted to 25.8 and 21.0 per cent respectively of exports and imports compared to 7.2 and 6.7 per cent in 1961-65. This naturally provided the setting for an increasing IMF-WB interventionism in Sri Lankan economic policy after 1965. This interventionism, starting at a rather low level in 1965, became gradually stronger within the second half of the decade.

At the beginning of the period 1956-70, the IMF-WB group tried to

influence the country's economic policy while remaining within the broad outlines of the existing control regime "Shortly after taking office, the government entered into a Standby Agreement with the IMF, as a result of which sizeable drawings have been made" (ABRD, 1966 a, p 24) While tolerating the existing import/exchange controls, the IMF considered at this juncture that it was sufficient to impose conditions on the government of Sri Lanka pertaining mainly to domestic fiscal and monetary management

- (a) to review the full subsidy scheme with a view to the progressive reduction of its burden on the government budget,
- (b) to stem "the ever-rising tide of current expenditures in Ceylon's welfare state" (IBRD, 1966 p 16)¹⁰
- (c) to keep inflationary finance of budget deficits within limits,
- (d) to eliminate the operating losses of government enterprises by raising the prices they charge and by eliminating excess manpower employed by them,
- (e) to raise more revenue, e.g. by "extending taxation to domestic agriculture" (*ibid* p 18) which was enjoying various free benefits from the state and also through other tax measures,
- (f) to restrain the growth of bank credit to public and private sectors;
- (g) to increase interest rates,
- (h) to promote private sector investments through measures like tax incentives, and generally, to improve the climate for the inflow of foreign official and private capital

The above were some of the main policy suggestions found in the published IBRD reports of 1966 cited. The above list indicates the general line of the IMF-WB thinking at the time about the required policy reforms in Sri Lanka. As revealed by the Finance Minister of the regime which succeeded that of 1965-70, most of the above policy suggestions had gone into the letters of intent signed by the government of Sri Lanka with the IMF at the time of the Standby of 1965

Since the structural weaknesses of the economy were left untouched, the above stabilisation measures failed to bring the country's balance of payments into equilibrium. The trade deficit, for example, increased from Rs 13 million (0.7 per cent of exports) in 1965 to Rs 344 million (20.5 per cent of exports) and Rs 335 million (20.3 per cent of exports) in 1966 and 1967 respectively. Following monetarist reasoning the Central Bank argued that "the stringent controls were not capable of solving the main balance of payments problems" (CB, 1968, p 2) and also that "the dwindling import capacity in relation to actual import requirements, the existence of an active black market in foreign exchange and the heavy reliance on more and more stringent controls were all indicative of an unrealistic rate of exchange" (*ibid*, p 21). The words "unrealistic" and "over-valued" were used interchangeably (*ibid*, p 20) in connection with the exchange rate.

It was on the basis of these arguments that the authorities justified some

of the policies adopted in 1967-68 with respect to external payments, particularly the 20 per cent devaluation of the rupee in November 1967 (*ibid* p 21) and the introduction of the system of dual exchange rates known as the Foreign Exchange Entitlement Certificate (FEEC) scheme in May 1968. The basic exchange rate after the devaluation of 1967 " was a good basic rate (but) was not sufficiently realistic to permit the liberalisation of a substantial range of imports" (*ibid* p 21). Through the FEEC scheme, the regime intended to provide cash incentives to selected exports and invisible transactions and to impose an additional rupee cost on selected imports and invisible payments. Along with the introduction of this scheme, a substantial proportion of imports was liberalised.

Thus the year 1968 witnessed a culmination of the trend which began in 1965 towards strong intervention by the IMF-WB Group in Sri Lanka. The measures of 1967-68, including rupee devaluation, dual exchange rate system and import liberalisation were the elements of the usual IMF stabilisation package which were missing from 1965 to November 1967. Although details are not given, the Central Bank report cited in the preceding paragraphs clearly identifies the hand of the IMF in these policy reforms, particularly in its statement that "the Government in consultation with the International Monetary Fund introduced the Foreign Exchange Entitlement Certificate Scheme " (p 22). As usual in an IMF package, the above measures were combined with restrictive monetary measures—increases in bank reserve ratios, the Bank Rate and correspondingly other interest rates, together with ceilings on commercial bank credit (*ibid* pp 25-26). Attempts were also made to restrict the inflationary impact of the budget by introducing revenue-increasing and expenditure-restraining measures.¹¹

As often happens immediately after a liberalisation exercise which a writer dealing with a similar situation elsewhere describes as a "beginner's luck" (Bello *et al*, 1982, p 42) the aggregative yardstick of the growth rate showed an impressive response to new policies: this rate went up from 4.4 per cent in 1967 to 8.3 per cent in 1968, dropping subsequently to 5.7 per cent in 1969. The balance of payments, the correction of which was the basic objective of trade liberalisation and selective devaluation, however, showed a worsening trend. The trade deficit changed marginally from Rs 335 million (20.3 per cent of exports) in 1967 to Rs 380 million (19.2 per cent of exports) in 1968 and from there nearly doubled to Rs 746 million (39.1 per cent of exports) in 1969. Similar trends were observable in the goods and services account and the total current account. As was shown in Table II, there was growing support from international financial institutions, donor countries and foreign banks to carry out the above policy reforms. Total external assets net of sinking funds increased marginally in absolute terms from Rs 407 million in 1967 to Rs 417 million in 1968 as a result of this growing foreign capital inflow.¹² But, relative to annual imports, there was a decline in these reserves, from 20.5 to 17.7 per cent of imports. The higher inflow of foreign capital, however, could not compensate adequately for the increases in foreign payments in the wake of the 1968 import liberalisation. Thus external

assets dropped to Rs 327.5 million (12.3 per cent of imports) in 1969

The monetarist, free-market policies promoted in Sri Lanka during 1965-69 through IMF-WB intervention, however, caught the country in a severe debt trap and a situation of widening disparities in the society. Although there are no statistics directly to back up the second opinion above, the overwhelming political rejection of the régime by the masses in 1970 seems to lend support to the conclusion, which is also inescapable on *a priori* grounds within a free enterprise, market-guided system. There is clear quantitative evidence, however, to show the menacing debt trap in which the country found itself in 1970 as a result of the IMF policies of 1965-69. Although it was a political statement, the Budget speech of 1970 can be used here as source material, according to which the government incurred short-term debts to the IMF amounting to Rs 723.4 million during 1965-70. Having repurchased Rs 301.7 million up to May 1970, the country was still indebted to the IMF to the tune of Rs 421.7 million.¹³ In addition, the country borrowed heavily from Western financial markets in order to sustain the system of liberalised imports. In October 1970, such short-term commercial debts amounted to Rs 350 million (Minister of Finance, 1970, p. 11). These short-term debts which the Minister cited, Rs 772 million in all, amounted to 38.3 per cent of the country's export earnings in 1970. The limited import liberalisation exercise undertaken during 1968-70 under IMF-WB advice was thus supported heavily by short-term external debt. The debt service ratio¹⁴ had increased from 13.1 per cent in 1969 to 20.1 per cent in 1970.

The régime which came to power in the General Elections of 1970 was a coalition of political parties, in which the SLFP, as the leading partner, joined hands with two Marxist parties. The régime embarked on policy making with two commitments which would have been anathema to the IMF-WB Group (a) "to lay the foundation for an irrevocable transition of the economy to a socialist one" and (b) "to maintain social welfare measures" (Minister of Finance, 1970, pp. 4-5). As in the case of the régime of 1956-65, the "socialist" economy which the 1970 régime also wished to promote was in fact a mixed economy in which "private enterprise has a part to play" but the leading part (is) in the hands of the public sector. Dominance was in conflict with the free market, private enterprise ideology of the West. Similarly the commitment to maintain welfare services was in contravention of all the advice given consistently to Sri Lankan governments in the past by various advisory teams of the IMF and the WB.

Having criticised the actions of his predecessors for uncritically accepting the terms and conditions of the IMF and thereby putting the country in a severe debt trap, the Finance Minister nevertheless argued that it is not possible to repudiate and reject the IMF advice and its terms and conditions totally without facing far-reaching dislocations (Minister of Finance, 1970, p. 11). Rejecting the course of full defiance to the IMF and international capitalism, the Minister proposed a *via media* "between undiluted acceptance of the terms and conditions of foreign institutions and the foolhardy

rejection of all aid. Undoubtedly, we must get foreign aid. These aid arrangements must be concluded in terms consistent with our self-respect, our independence and our sovereignty" (*Ibid* pp 12-13)¹

It is not possible with the available information to determine the exact nature of the "via media" taken by the regime of 1970-77. In contrast to the post-1977 package of policies, the control regime of this period did not receive the blessings of the IMF-WB group. Diplomatically worded strictures abound in the reports of IBRD Missions of the period against (a) welfare policies, (b) the policy of public enterprise expansion and the negligent attitudes of the government towards their inefficient management, (c) inadequacy of policy to improve productivity in agriculture in general and in export crops in particular, (d) inadequacy of incentives for private enterprise, (e) price controls, (f) the dual exchange rate system, (g) excessive import-substitution bias and capital intensity in industry, etc. As should be expected, these Missions were, in general, opposed to the high degree of "market interventionism" and the "consumption bias" of the policy which prevailed during this period. They wished to see a fundamental reorientation of policies mainly a clear orientation towards growth through the market mechanism which would enable them to recommend to aid donors the desirability of greater concessionary assistance to the regime.

Throughout the period, the regime seems to have put up some resistance to introducing the kind of fundamental policy reorientation the IMF and the WB would have endorsed. The controls remained, the expansion of state capitalism continued, and a wide range of welfare measures was in operation. As a natural consequence of this stubbornness, the inflow of concessionary assistance remained low and private foreign capital kept away. Saddled with the repercussions of a widespread mass uprising in 1971 and the oil shock of 1973-74 and also disappointed with the small magnitude of the concessionary foreign assistance received, the regime seems to have tried to maintain a relative degree of economic sovereignty by resorting to short-term commercial borrowing from abroad to finance needed imports. In contrast to the post-1977 period, therefore, the maturity structure of the external debt during the six years 1971-76 shows a relatively greater bias towards short-term debt (Table III). The relatively high debt service ratio during this period is thus understandable. Marginal policy shifts in 1976 and 1977 and changes in the composition of the political coalition in power in these years¹⁵ produced, towards the end of the 1970-77 regime, a slightly higher inflow of long-term concessionary foreign loans. Combined with higher export earnings due to improved export prices, the above developments were responsible for the drop in the debt service ratio to 16 per cent in 1977.

The regime did not, however, receive the necessary backing from autonomous developments in the surrounding economic environment in its policy of resistance to IMF-WB pressures. The deterioration of the terms of trade in the contexts of slow change in the export trade structure and increasing demand for imports imposed severe strains on the balance of payments.

Table III—Composition of External Debt Outstanding and the Debt Service Ratio, Selected Years, 1971-82

	Percentages ^b					
	1971	1973	1975	1977	1979	1982
Long-term Debt	69	72	70	80	82	81
Suppliers' Credit ^(a)	3	9	9	7	4	2
IMF Drawings	16	12	16	9	13	12
Bank Borrowings	12	7	6	4	—	4
Total (Rs. Million)	2775.6	3725.2	5301.2	13321.3	19239.6	42533.9
Debt Service Ratio(%)	21.9	23.0	22.9	16.0	13.0	15.0

Notes (a) The highest level—12 per cent—to which the proportion of suppliers' credits rose during the period was in 1974 and is not shown in the Table

(b) May not add up to 100 because of rounding

—indicates less than 0.5

Source: Central Bank Annual Reports and Reviews (various)

Growth of population and the people's aspirations within a climate of keen popular political awareness made the total government expenditure, which was heavily biased towards the maintenance of a welfare state, extremely inflexible and almost impossible to reduce. Thus despite attempts to find increased revenue sources, the contribution of the government to domestic savings remained either negative or, if positive, extremely negligible. Thus the structural weakness of the economy and the unfavourable external and internal developments beyond the control of the government, combined to generate strong contradictions within the strategy of equitable and egalitarian development of 1970-77. The conditions were worsened further by inappropriate and inadequate measures taken by the government to implement this strategy within the weak structural conditions and unfavourable global developments, particularly the inadequacy of measures to improve productivity in the dominant state capitalist sector of the economy which after 1975 included also the large plantations, and the inappropriateness of measures to mobilise private enterprise and initiative. Hence the consistent theme of the "growth"-conscious IBRD teams, with their strong belief in the efficacy of market forces, that Sri Lanka's chronic economic difficulties were due to its over-dependence on a few primary commodities for export earnings, the political commitment to far-reaching welfare and redistributive objectives, various price distortions resulting from existing controls, over-consumption and inadequacy of savings and investments, widespread inefficiency in the state sector and general discouragement of private enterprise.

The very survival of the strategy under these circumstances depended

heavily on external financial support. Despite some assistance from the Socialist bloc, the bulk of this needed support had to come from the capitalist West, which depended in a crucial way on the good performance certificate of its agents, the IMF and the World Bank. Throughout this period their 'character certificates' were chequered with reservations about the viability of the strategy. Thus the WB-organised Aid Group's contributions to the Sri Lankan regime remained low.

In order to receive even this trickle of aid from the consortium and more importantly in order to obtain the necessary balance of payments support from the IMF, the regime had to make certain compromises, although these did not amount to any radical reorientation of policy as recommended by the IMF and the WB. A case in point was the readjustments in 1973 and 1974 in the food subsidy policy, the bone of contention between the IMF-WB Group and the Sri Lankan government since the early 1950's.

The Post-1977 "Open" Economy

The control regime of 1970-77, in retrospect, can be shown to have produced at a national level, advantageous as well as disadvantageous results in economic and other fields. Without expressing the writer's personal opinions about the relative magnitudes of these advantageous and disadvantageous effects, a few of them can be just listed here to provide some basis for understanding the electoral response of the masses in 1977 to this control regime.

There was slow but somewhat consistent growth of real GNP over the period 1970-77 as a whole. The year 1971 was a period of almost complete stagnation (a growth rate of 0.4 per cent) due mainly to a widespread armed struggle of the youth against the regime in power, but the trend rate of growth for the entire period of 1970-77 was at 3 per cent per annum. If corrected for terms of trade effects, however, the annual growth rate for the period may be less than 3 per cent. The sluggish conditions in GNP growth, however, were combined with a gradual improvement in conditions of relative income inequality in the country and in the living conditions of the poor income receivers. There was also a trend towards greater equality in the distribution of wealth (Lakshman, 1980). The contemporary achievements in the sphere of social development and basic needs satisfaction had in fact produced favourable comments from even World Bank quarters.

Sri Lanka's record on life expectancy, literacy and fertility (in relations to its low income level) is one of the best in the world. Sri Lanka has done no worse in terms of growth than other countries at its income level, while greatly outperforming them in human development (World Bank, 1980, p. 90).

The reports of IBRD Missions to Sri Lanka in the mid-1970's are also replete with similar comments about the country's achievements in this sphere. The system, moreover, managed to keep annual increases in the general price level at less than 2-digit figures—except in the exceptional year

of 1974 with its 12 per cent increase in the Cost of Living Index¹⁶ — in spite of the oil shocks of 1973-74 and their wide-ranging impact, particularly on import prices and domestic transport costs. The Cost of Living Index used here is quite well-known for its weaknesses, but taking it for what it is worth, the average of the annual rates of inflation over 1970-77 on the basis of that index works out to 5.7 per cent, in contrast to the corresponding average of 16 per cent for 1978-82. The trade balance was consistently in deficit during 1970-76¹⁷ but the cumulative deficit for the period was at a manageable 22 per cent of exports, as compared to the cumulative trade deficit of 80 per cent of exports at the height of the post-1977 "open" economy during 1979-82. External assets increased from 16 per cent of imports in 1970 to 26 and 89 per cent respectively in 1976 and 1977. Despite the phenomenal increase in "foreign aid" and other foreign capital inflows after 1977, the corresponding ratio was at 26 per cent in 1981 and also in 1982.

Along with these and other favourable elements in the macro-economic impact of the control regime of 1970-77, there were also a number of weak and socially harmful elements. Due to the sluggishness of economic activity and other reasons the rate of unemployment increased from 14.4 per cent in 1969/70¹⁸ to 20 per cent in 1977 (IBRD, 1978, p. 9). There were widespread scarcities, which were felt severely in the market for even essential foodstuffs, particularly in 1973-74. As usual in any situation of controls, black market practices were widespread and also other social malpractices—political patronage, nepotism, bribery, abuse of power etc.¹⁹

The above were politically explosive issues, which would have overwhelmed whatever long-term beneficial effect the control regime may have had from the point of view of equitable self-reliant national development. Naturally, the right-wing opposition of the UNP very effectively made political capital of these sensitive issues during the General Elections of 1977. The election campaign was largely based on an agitation against the social malpractices which emerged out of the existing control regime. It is on a call to establish a "free and just society" devoid of these social malpractices that the UNP fought the General Elections—with the Sinhala language version of this slogan, "dharmishta samajaya", carrying a greater weight on an election of Sinhala Buddhist majority than would appear from its English translation. The UNP emerged victorious in the election in 1977 with an unprecedentedly large parliamentary majority. This large majority later permitted the Government to introduce far-reaching constitutional changes in 1978 in which the system of government was converted from a parliamentary system of the Westminster type to a Presidential system. Not only the constitutional system but also the system of the country's economic management was drastically changed giving rise to the system of "open economy" which continues to date with only minor modifications.

The main elements of these policy reforms, announced towards the end of 1977, can be listed briefly as follows, with the caveat that any summary presentation of a complex economic strategy, by leaving out useful details, may fail to provide a completely adequate description of its nature.

- (a) Liberalisation of import trade and exchange payments, elimination of the dual exchange rate system, exchange devaluation towards the end of 1977 followed up by a floating of the rupee along a path of gradual depreciation. These exchange rate policies were adopted allegedly to facilitate import and exchange liberalisation. The exchange rate which was at an average of Rs 8.86 to a US dollar at the end of 1976²⁰ had depreciated to a rate of over Rs 25 to a dollar in early 1984—a depreciation of 65 per cent over a seven year period on the basis of the official rate of 1976 and a depreciation of 41 per cent on the basis of the FEEC rate of 1976.
- (b) Abolition of most price controls while keeping a system of “administered prices” for certain products of importance in the society’s consumption patterns and grant of greater autonomy to public corporations for more realistic pricing policies in order to help them achieve “commercial viability”.
- (c) Attempts to reduce budgetary expenditures on account of food subsidies by introducing a system of “food stamps” whereby stamps of a given value were issued to low income families and market forces were allowed generally to determine the price of commodities purchasable with these stamps.
- (d) Promotion of private enterprise, including direct foreign investments, through a wide array of fiscal, infrastructural and other incentives.
- (e) Restraint in granting wage demands in general and those within the public sector in particular, along with repressive measures against the trade union movement.
- (f) Restrictive monetary measures marked with unprecedentedly high interest rates and intermittent credit squeezes imposed on commercial bank lending. Apart from short periods of these credit squeezes, however, private and public sectors do not seem to have encountered much difficulty in obtaining the required bank credit²¹.
- (g) Sharp increases in government capital expenditure, particularly on infrastructural and housing projects, despite the fact that this necessitated the running of large budget deficits, even if they had to be bridged through inflationary finance.
- (h) Search for increasing volumes of “foreign aid”.
- (i) Measures to promote economic activities earning foreign exchange (export-oriented industry, export crops, tourism, labour migration for foreign jobs etc.) Hence the claim of the proponents of the “open economy” that their strategy is one of “export-led growth”.

There are many contradictions in the policy package as promulgated and implemented after 1977. A discussion of these contradictions requires a detailed sector-wise analysis of the package and its implementation. Such a detailed analysis, though interesting, lies unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper.

One point in this connection, however, may be made. In attempts to

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find a brief descriptive title for the above package, the government spokesmen have come to prefer the title of "open economy". The message implicit in the use of this title is that the economy is made to operate essentially on a private enterprise basis, guided by free market forces—basically the type of economy envisaged by monetarists like Milton Friedman (Friedman & Friedman, 1980). The "openness" however, is limited to trade and exchange payments. In most areas, bureaucratic power has in fact become strengthened and centralised. Areas of activity open to private enterprise are, no doubt, almost unlimited, yet the role of public enterprise in the economy continues also to be very prominent, in some sectors, even dominant. Such contradictions in the policy of "open economy" do clearly have their economic, political and social rationale but the discussion of this in detail could be a study in itself.

The regime's argument in various official statements and political speeches has generally been that the strategy outlined above was implemented on its own free will.²² Attempts have been made to interpret the political mandate received from the masses to build up a "free and just" society as a mandate to implement the type or measures outlined above.

this country could not have economic growth and development, could not go forward and solve problems of production and employment until we create one economy in this country, a free and just economy with one exchange rate, with no restrictive controls and a rational fiscal, financial and monetary policy. We have to put an end once and for all to the black market economy and give an impetus to free growth in the context of a democratic socialist society (Minister of Finance, 1977, p. 9).

We are committed to establish a free and just society in our land. The foundation, the *sine qua non*, for a free and just society is a free and just economy (*ibid.*, p. 2).

Despite statements of this nature coming from the leaders of the regime, it is extremely doubtful whether the UNP had, at the time of the General Elections of 1977, a well-articulated policy position favouring the type of package introduced after their electoral victory. If the nature of the electoral mandate they received is to be judged by the contents of the Party Manifesto on which these elections were fought, then clearly there was no mandate from the people to establish the type of "open" economy which exists today. There is some correspondence between certain elements in the party programme as envisaged in this Manifesto and actual measures taken after 1977 in the economic policy scene. But to argue that, in particular, the trade, exchange, monetary and fiscal measures of the post-1977 "open economy" were envisaged, even in their bare outline, during the election campaign, requires quite an imaginative interpretation of the contents of the UNP's electoral manifesto of 1977.

The determining hand of the IMF-WB Group in the shaping and implementation of the "open economy" is abundantly clear but any con-

- conclusive proof of this statement—e.g., through reference to letters of intent signed by the government with the IMF—is not possible as the relevant official documents are not available to independent researchers. An independent researcher, however, requires little imagination to derive the above conclusion if he carefully examines the available indirect evidence, even if the few isolated reports of speeches made by leaders of the regime cited later were not available.

Firstly, the policy package known in Sri Lanka as the “open” economy package corresponds, in almost all of its elements, with the IMF stabilisation package as described briefly in the introductory section. It would clearly be over-naïve to expect the local regime to have stumbled upon this package through its own independent thinking and experimentation. No doubt, there are minor deviations between the usual IMF package and the Sri Lankan “open” economy package. On the fiscal front, budget deficits have increased in size annually since 1977 even after allowance is made for inflation. On the monetary front, restrictive “price elements” were combined with a quantitatively unrestricted availability of bank credit in general, although there were occasional credit squeezes to satisfy the IMF and the WB. The result has been an unabated rapid annual increase in bank credit and money supply. Cases of this nature are clearly contradictory to the prototype IMF stabilisation package. With available evidence it is difficult to explain how and why such deviations came to be permitted—despite constant reminders in the advisory reports of the IBRD about the ill-effects of excessive government expenditures and unrestrained monetary expansion. This is perhaps some kind of a compromise the government of Sri Lanka and the world bodies have struck in their negotiations among growth, equity and stability objectives—perhaps these bodies are rethinking the advisability of imposing unconditional fiscal and monetary restraint in the light of the accepted belief that all these elements are essential for successful development.

Secondly, Sri Lanka, in 1977, did not have an external economic position favouring extensive import liberalisation on its own initiative. The government may have known at the time of the policy reforms of 1977, that the year would end with a trade surplus because of improved terms of trade but no serious economic forecast would have predicted that such favourable external conditions would continue even into the medium-term future. With the weak primary-product-dominated export structure continuing, any extensive liberalisation of imports required assured sources of foreign exchange funds. Hence the necessity of the Standby Agreement and the Extended Fund Facility Agreement signed with the IMF at the early stages of creating the “open economy”. The sustenance of the “open economy” to date has been achieved not through any significant, lasting improvement in the structure of exports and in earnings from export of goods and services but essentially through increased inflow of “foreign aid” and other forms of foreign capital marginally supported by highly unpredictable and uncertain private transfers from Sri Lankan workers abroad. It is common knowledge now that

such large volumes of foreign capital will not be available to a Third World country like Sri Lanka without the blessings of the IMF and the WB. These blessings, it is also common knowledge, are given at the intensity as obtains in Sri Lanka, only to docile and obedient regimes which would allow these institutions to experiment with their prototype policies within their shores.

Thirdly, the available reports of the IBRD advisory missions of this period leave no doubt about the behind-the-curtain advisors and what the latent pressures have been in this policy experimentation. Since these reports are intended solely for official use, making direct references to them is avoided here, even though they are available quite freely for the benefit of researchers. One often finds that the principal annual official statement of government policy, namely the budget speech, has, in a number of important respects, been anticipated by the preceding IBRD advisory reports. These reports sometimes refer to government's agreements with the IMF on policy matters although naturally the exact nature of these agreements is not divulged. On the eve of visits by IMF or WB teams, one witnesses hectic activity in economic ministries and institutions and sudden policy decisions of the type favoured by these institutions are announced—sharp rupee depreciation, credit squeezes, Finance Ministry announcements of expenditure cuts etc.

Fourthly, there has been no comparable period since independence in Sri Lanka when so many newspaper reports and editorials have been published about IMF-WB interventionism and so many cartoons drawn about the regime's capitulation to these institutions. Even foreign newspapers and news magazines have come to refer to Sri Lanka after 1977 as a country of IMF policy experimentation (see e.g. *Financial Times* of 18 July 1980, p. 3).

Finally, and most importantly, there are the occasional statements of the leaders of the regime which let the cat out of the bag. Certain off-the-text remarks made by the President of the country at the Non-aligned Conference of 1983 held in New Delhi are quite revealing about the IMF-WB stranglehold over the "open economy" regime. Quoting Dante, he suggested that these two institutions should put up a plaque on their doors with the warning "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." In a press conference held in New Delhi, he is reported to have said that the Sri Lankan "open economy" would not be able to survive without their aid. These critical comments about the behaviour of these institutions were apparently intended to be an overture to his basic plea for relaxation of the conditions they lay down on Third World countries (see Marvyn de Silva's report in *The Island* of 11 March 1983). Yet the above statements leave no doubt about the dependence of the "open economy" of Sri Lanka on the goodwill of the IMF-WB Group. With a correspondent of *The Hindu*, the country's President had expressed his disillusionment with the IMF pressures in greater detail as follows:

When they say 'devalue' immediately my costs go up. The cost of food

goes up I can't do that My people must be the judge You will have violence here Whole time they are suggesting 'keep on devaluing, devaluing' We have devalued from, I think, when the dollar was for 10 rupees They say go up to 24, 25, 28, 29, 30 The time may come when we have to say 'stop' ²³

Again in an editorial titled "Sri Lanka and the IMF", *The Island* of 9 March 1983 refers to a newsreport where the following statement is also attributed to the President of the country

the recent spate of price increases and the revision of the rupee rate against the dollar in Sri Lanka were a result of requests made by the IMF (T)he increased price of essential commodities including rice and bread as well as transport were necessary for Sri Lanka to obtain an Extended Fund Facility from the IMF to tide over a precarious balance of payments situation

In addition one comes across revealing statements made by the Minister of Finance (as reported in the daily press) about IMF-WB interventionism The references are too numerous for detailed documentation here Just the latest statement of this nature reported may be cited as an example—a statement implicitly attributed to the Minister in a newsreport in *The Island* of 29 January 1984

The World Bank and the IMF have asked Sri Lanka to either reduce public spending by Rs 5,000 million or increase public revenue by Rs 5 000 million

Concluding Comments

In spite of frequent claims that the post-1977 "open economy" has been an autonomous creation of the government, the above analysis leads to the unassailable conclusion that Sri Lanka after 1977 has become yet one more laboratory for IMF-WB experimentation These institutions, whose resources and policies are controlled by the developed countries of the West, probably sincerely believe that the free market, private enterprise, capitalist system which proved effective in those countries in the advancement of the forces of production, will also be effective in the Third World More plausible, however, is the argument that the benefits such a system would provide to international capital by way of opening up the markets in the Third World do generate inevitable pressures on these international institutions as the agents of such capital to promote free trade and free enterprise systems in these countries The particularly strong emphasis these institutions lay on the promotion of direct foreign investments also highlights their role as agents of international capital

It is true that these arguments of the critics are disputed by the spokesmen of and for these institutions A fair proportion of a recent address of the IMF's Managing Director, for example, was devoted to argue that the Fund does not "impose" its conditions on member states but merely works out suitable adjustment policies in mutual agreement with sovereign member

states and also that it is incorrect to say that the resulting conditionality is unduly harsh on developing members states (*IMF Survey*, 9 January, 1984)

The IMF's position in this connection is correct from a technical point of view in the sense that, by its very nature, it has to operate with the concurrence of the sovereign states concerned. In the final analysis, it is the domestic regimes involved which have to administer the IMF-recommended medicine within their countries. On the other hand, the critics' arguments are also correct from a realistic, practical point of view, since the domestic regimes which come under IMF surveillance agree to abide by the IMF conditions virtually as a last resort to get over critical payments and other problems. The parties to the negotiations involved are therefore highly unequal in terms of economic power in general, and bargaining strength at the negotiating table in particular.

As was clearly shown in the historical examination of the Sri Lankan case, the ideological positions of the regimes concerned, no doubt, would be a significant factor determining the outcome of their negotiations with the IMF and the WB. These institutions have for example found the UNP regimes in Sri Lanka more amenable to their pressures than the SLFP regimes because, among other things, the character and the ideology of the UNP made it more receptive to the IMF-WB type of policy formulae.

In an economically and structurally weak Third World country, however, a regime like that of SLFP in Sri Lanka, committed as it was to a basically capitalist path of development, would not have been able to avert IMF-WB interventionism purely through an ideology of self-reliance. The influence of the ideology in this instance may be neutralised by economic and social developments which fail to back up the given ideological position. Thus the resistance which the regime of 1970-77 in Sri Lanka could put up to IMF-WB pressures could not be maintained consistently because of hostile economic developments. Signs were evident at the last stages of this regime that it was a mere matter of time for its capitulation to these pressures although it obtained some breathing space in 1976-77 owing to the improvement in the terms of trade, before the masses defeated the regime in the polls of 1977.

At this point of the analysis two pertinent questions crop up. The first one of these is whether the IMF-WB package today in Sri Lanka shows signs of achieving the objectives of growth, structural change, stability and overall development. Although the present paper does not discuss this question, other papers which have been addressed to this question have come out with a rather negative answer. The second question following from the conclusions of this paper concerns available alternatives. This is a more fundamental question. The present paper is merely suggestive of answers to that fundamental question.

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- 1 Capitalist form of organisation is generally thought to produce a development of the forces of production. Whether the plantation form, as introduced into export crops in Sri Lanka and various other plantation economies, can be called capitalist in this sense is being disputed by some writers (de Silva, 1981)
- 2 The IMF did not directly come into the picture in the early 1950's. In public policy discussion of this period in Sri Lanka, no reference had been made to IMF interventionism
- 3 The above statements are true for the years 1950 and 1951
- 4 Due to popular pressure, food subsidies were reintroduced but at a much lower rate than existed before their total withdrawal in 1953. In 1956, the new government brought them back at rates which existed in early 1953
- 5 The UNP lost the General Elections of 1956 and a coalition of parties known as the MEP, dominated by the SLEP, acquired the reins of government
- 6 Subsequent behaviour of the terms of trade also was downward. Post-1965 behaviour of terms of trade will be referred to later in the discussion
- 7 Relative to export earnings, the trade deficits of this period were quite low in comparison to subsequent periods. They were so kept at low levels mainly through a system of import controls which were made increasingly rigorous with the passage of time
- 8 As argued by Corea: "During this period foreign aid was not a significant source of finance for imports. Whilst, in the beginning of the sixties, external capital flows financed 25 per cent of the total imports of developing countries and 22 per cent of the imports of Asian countries, the corresponding proportion for Ceylon averaged a little more than 4 per cent" (Corea, 1971, p. 28)
- 9 Excluding a brief period of minority government by the United National Party in 1960
- 10 The consumer subsidy on rice was perhaps the most obnoxious element in the Sri Lankan welfare state, from the viewpoint of the IMF-WB group. The rice ration issued on subsidy was cut by half in November 1966
- 11 The above formed part of the letter of intent signed by the government with the IMF at the time of the Standby Agreement of May 1968. Incidentally this letter of intent also included an agreement not to enter into any new bilateral payments agreements (Minister of Finance, 1970, p. 9)
- 12 Compared to 1966 (Rs 282 million) of course, there was a substantial increase in external reserves in 1967 but this was achieved through higher foreign capital inflow combined with import/exchange controls
- 13 The amount of Rs 422 million cited by the Minister in October 1970 is higher than net inflow figure on account of transactions with the IMF as shown in Table 2 above for 1966-70. The difference is due to the inclusion of 1965 in the Minister's statement
- 14 Debt service payments as a proportion of earnings from export of goods and services
- 15 By 1976-77 the Marxists who were in the coalition (United Left Front) which came into power in 1970 had left the coalition. Particularly noteworthy in this connection was the absence of the Marxist of Finance in the Government as from 1975
- 16 Officially called the Colombo Consumers' Price Index
- 17 The year 1977 has been excluded from this calculation because of the windfall trade surplus of the year which resulted from the improvement in the terms of trade
- 18 Socio-Economic Survey of 1969-70
- 19 This statement does not at all imply that the reduction of these controls after 1977 eliminated these social evils. On the contrary, they are to be found within the "open" economy on a magnified scale
- 20 This was the official rate in 1976. A large proportion of foreign exchange payments and receipts was conducted at a rate about 65 per cent higher than the official. Transactions subject to this higher rate amounted to about 60 per cent of imports and 35 per cent of exports

- 21 One wonders whether these intermittent credit squeezes were precipitated by impending IMF-WB Missions and subsequently relaxed after the relevant negotiations were concluded. A case in point was the credit squeeze of the late 1983.
- 22 Some statements contradicting this position, which in fact correctly described the actual reality, are referred to later.
- 23 This "time to stop" does not seem, however, to be in sight as the rupee keeps on gliding down. Standing up to the IMF and the WB is not within the power of the regime, unless the "open economy" strategy itself is abandoned.

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QAZI KHOLIQUZZAMAN AHMAD*

*Aid, Influence and Development in Bangladesh***

THAT Bangladesh is heavily dependent on foreign aid is a widely known fact. But how heavy is that dependence is not perhaps so well-known. And much less awareness exists even among the informed public about its implications and consequences

The Way the Aid Regime Set In

There was a tremendous sympathetic response from the world community to help in the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-ravaged economy. In fact, an aid commitment of about US \$ two billion was made to that end in the first three years of independence¹ In those days there was in fact a hesitancy on the part of the Government of Bangladesh about adopting a policy of foreign aid-based development. However, the leadership of the United Nations for coordinating aid flow for reconstruction and rehabilitation was accepted, which set up UN Relief Operation in Dhaka (UNROD), later renamed UN Special Relief Office in Bangladesh (UNROB). Nonetheless, the bilateral and other multilateral aid donors naturally operated within that structure and, as might be suspected, gained a foothold and influenced the unfolding policy scenario in respect of development strategy and the role of foreign aid in that process.

There were of course foreign aid lobbies within and outside the government in Bangladesh, who, along with the donors, put up a formidable front dangling the foreign aid option before the decision makers who had a very difficult choice before them. There was a war-ravaged economy to be repaired and put back on course for development as soon as possible in the face of formidable problems of savings gap, foreign exchange gap and food shortage compounded by the impact on the economy of the oil price hike and world-wide inflation. In this backdrop, a courage of conviction of the highest order was needed for choosing a path of self-reliant development which would call for shared sacrifices and total mobilization of both human

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and material resources. But such a balance of political will was simply not there. Moreover, the soft option provided by foreign aid was already being tasted in the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase. Thus, finally, by mid-1974 foreign aid which initially came as a relief activity was allowed to assume a pivotal role in the development process. And that was consummated with an emergency meeting of the consortium of aid donors for Bangladesh in Washington in August 1974, followed by its first regular meeting in Paris in October 1974.² Indeed, the successive governments have carried the process of aid dependence further. And by now foreign aid indeed has a pervasive grip on the economy of the country.

The Nature of the Aid Regime

It is ironical that the grip of foreign aid should be so pervasive in this country. For, although foreign aid commitment to this country has by now increased about three-fold³ in nominal terms and about two-fold in real terms since the aid option was adopted, the annual per capita aid receipt is still only about US \$ 12-14³, one of the lowest among all aid receiving countries. The general run of per capita aid receipt is US \$ 25-50, while some countries receive US \$ 100 and more.⁴ But the reasons are not far to seek. Even though per capita receipt is so low, foreign aid accounts for virtually the whole of the development budget, about two-thirds of the total imports and about 10-15 per cent of the total food supply in Bangladesh.⁵ It also generates counterpart funds through sale of food and other commodity aid, which are used for such purposes as procuring food grain from local market to feed the public food distribution system and contributing to the development budget.

In so far as the development budget is concerned, the practice has been to show the contribution of foreign aid at around 75 per cent of the total proposed expenditure in the Annual Development Plan (ADP), but usually the expected domestic resource mobilization does not materialise and the contribution of foreign aid goes up substantially ex-post. For example, the 1984-85 ADP has shown foreign aid to contribute 81 per cent of the total budget—up from the proposed 79 per cent in 1983-84 ADP.⁶ This increase in the proposed foreign aid contribution is itself significant as it implies a depreciation in the capacity of domestic resource mobilization. But that is only academic since it is already becoming clear that there is going to be significant shortfall in domestic resource mobilization even in relation to what has been proposed. Then, even the revenue budget is in deep crisis without foreign aid because a substantial part of the revenue receipts comes from custom duties and taxes on account of aid-financed imports, and excise duties collected from enterprises fed by aid-based imported materials.⁷

It appears therefore that foreign aid keeps the economy afloat. The grip of foreign aid on the economy is even more far reaching because of the mentality that has developed among the policy makers, planners and administrators that foreign aid provides the life line and it must therefore be sought and accepted whatever be the terms and conditionalities.

It should however be noted that Bangladesh has been receiving aid in grants and on very soft terms. Several countries have also converted loans into grants. During 1978-83, about 53 per cent of the total aid disbursed has been in grants, and the weighted average rate of interest charged by major donors has been 1.3 per cent during 1981-83.⁸ Consequently, while the total aid committed or disbursed to this country by 1984 is of the order of US \$ 17 billion, debt servicing ratio has been of the order of 10-13 per cent in recent years.⁹ This is moderate. The ratio is likely to peak at around 17-18 per cent towards the end of the 1980's and is expected to decline thereafter to return to the present level in a few years' time.¹⁰

In view of the fact that the debt servicing burden is rather moderate, one might argue that foreign aid which has been providing the best part of investment funds and foreign exchange for substantial part of the imports, meeting the food gap and supporting the revenue budget to a significant extent is in fact good news for Bangladesh. But is that so?

Impact of Aid-Based Development Strategy

The basic idea behind foreign aid-based development strategy is that foreign aid makes up the foreign exchange and domestic savings gaps to enable the recipient country to make necessary investment and imports for achieving pre-determined growth rates. The strategy is one of dependent capitalist development. I do not wish here to go into the merits of this approach in the context of Bangladesh. I have discussed that elsewhere arguing that this is a wrong approach for this country. All I wish to do here is to look at the present situation and future outlook concerning the foreign exchange and domestic savings gaps vis-a-vis foreign aid received.

Not only that export earnings have failed to increase sufficiently, but there has also been a sharp decline in the terms of trade in recent years.¹¹ The balance of payments of the country is therefore characterised by a massive structural trade deficit, which has been around Tk. 2000 crore per annum during 1979-83.¹² And despite remittances by large numbers of Bangladeshis working abroad, foreign aid accounts for about two-thirds of the total annual import bill.

The remittances are unlikely to increase much in future because of limited scope for further manpower export. Export earnings have remained largely based on jute which faces uncertain long-term prospects. There has not been a tightening of belt towards strengthening the economic base by judicious use of export earnings and remittances in importing appropriate technology and essential materials. Indeed the import structure has been, and given that it serves the vested interest of the power elites is likely to remain, characterised by the import of luxury goods on the one hand and ordinary consumer items on the other which can and should be produced domestically. In the case of foreign aid funded import, its tied nature and other conditionalties associated with it have often caused the import of inappropriate technology and hence wastage of aid resources. Thus, not only that

foreign exchange gap has remained as critical as ever, but is in fact likely to remain so in the foreseeable future.

Regarding savings gap, the average savings rate (savings as percent of GDP) was 2.45 per cent over 1979-84, while total investment as per cent of GDP during the same period was 10.82 most of which (8.37 per cent of GDP) was made up of foreign aid.¹³ In seeking and accepting foreign aid the expectation is that increased investment will generate increased income which will, in turn, cause increased savings which will then allow repayment of the debt and replacement of the need for foreign aid so that a process of self-sustaining growth is brought about. But, that expectation has not materialized and, given the present state of the economy, unlikely to materialize in the foreseeable future. Indeed, all forecasts suggest that aid requirement will continue to increase to keep the economy afloat. A few oft-cited statistics may be recalled here to indicate how dismal the picture is despite billions of dollars of foreign aid received.

Per capita GNP at current prices for 1982-83 is Tk 3027 or US \$ 121.¹⁴ At constant (1972-73) prices, it rose to only Tk 786 by 1982-83 from Tk 710 in 1969-70 implying an annual rate of growth of 0.8 per cent. In fact, it declined in the first half of the 1970's and was Tk 695 in 1975-76 implying an annual rate of decline of 0.4 per cent.¹⁵ About 85 per cent of the population is now below the poverty line, and about 60 per cent is critically poor. These figures were respectively about 65 per cent in 1963-64 and about 42 per cent in 1973-74.¹⁶ About 40 per cent of the available labour time is unemployed, and about half the educated youth are either unemployed or employed in jobs which require much less education.¹⁷ Infant mortality rate is about 120 per one thousand live births.¹⁸ Literacy rate is only 23 per cent, and the primary level enrolment has in fact been down from 71 per cent in 1978 to 59 per cent in 1983.¹⁹

The picture is thus one of deepening and widening poverty. Whatever growth has taken place has mostly accrued to political, bureaucratic, military, business, industrial, landed and professional elites. That is, it is these groups who have been the principal beneficiaries of the aid regime. They benefit through ways such as distribution of spoils of office, leakages, foreign trips, industrial loans which tend to remain outstanding almost indefinitely, commissions earned as indentors and construction contractors, consultancy fees and access to publicly distributed food. They have benefited because they have control over or access to decision making processes or are volatile in nature such as the food aid beneficiaries comprising city dwellers, armed forces, workers in large enterprises and students in hostels.

It is also to be recognized that some rural poor are also benefiting from such programmes as food-for work, rural works programme and the Grameen Bank. But both the amount of benefit and the number of beneficiaries are marginal in the context of the totality of the poverty situation and benefits accruing to the elites.²⁰ It is of course just as well that some poor people are benefiting. But, these programmes are touted as success stories of aid-induced and aid-funded poverty alleviation strategies. Such touting is being

used as a subtle means to comouflage the big beneficiaries from the spotlight of scrutiny

In sum, then, foreign aid has benefited a tiny minority of power elites, while the large majority has remained alienated. And it has not created or even generated the prospect of creating in the foreseeable future a basis for self-sustaining growth.

Donor Influences and Interferences

On the other hand, donor influences and interferences have become a pervasive phenomenon in this country's economic, social, cultural and political life. On the economic front donor perspectives and aid conditionalities have been having pervasive influence on the investment and ownership patterns, organizational set-up, management styles, technology, distribution system, exchange rate, pricing policy and monetary and fiscal policies. Selection, design and location of projects, appointment of key personnel, how and by whom performance evaluation is to be carried out are all either dictated or have to be approved by the donors in most cases. The donor influences have also penetrated the socio-cultural practices and political directions in this country as the elite economic beneficiaries of foreign aid take to life styles and cultural practices of their foreign mentors and backers and also derive their politics from the tenets and perspectives held by the latter.

Indeed, every year a high point in economic planning in this country is the Paris meet of the aid donors and the frantic preparation made for this. It is there that the past year's performance is scrutinized and aid commitment for the coming year is indicated by the donors. But that provides only the overall frame of aid availability, details concerning each aid contract are worked out through protracted negotiations and many procedures and formalities have to be fulfilled in the process. In these negotiations, this country's policies are called into question and donor perspectives are imposed and sovereignty of the government in respect of decision making and implementation of development projects get compromised. The donor dictates are accepted because foreign aid has been allowed to become the cornerstone of development strategy and, hence, the aid donors have assumed the role of philosophers and guides. Decisions are usually made in donor offices in Dhaka or in their headquarters in New York, Washington, Vienna, Geneva or elsewhere, although motions may be seen to be gone through to make a decision look as if the Government of Bangladesh has played its legitimate role in it.

It should be recognized that there are differing interests and capabilities among donor countries and agencies. Within Bangladesh also there are different interest and influence groups. Aid modality, therefore, consists of a process of reconciliation of these conflicting forces, each projecting its own viewpoint and trying to safeguard its own interests. In this process vested interests rule supreme and the national interest of the country becomes the sacrificial lamb. Hence, the final outcome of a process of aid negotiation may

in fact be far removed from the ideal defined in terms of national interest. This must have been a major contributing factor to the consequences of the aid regime in Bangladesh as outlined earlier (grim economic base and bleak future outlook despite the huge foreign aid received and the capture of most of its benefits by the power elites while the large majority has remained deprived and alienated).

Moreover, in a situation characterised by conflicts, contradictions, and uncertainties, a class of touts, both local and foreign, have come into their own. They have been acting as aid brokers to promote projects and sale of items they have an interest in. They seek their own interest and perhaps that of their principals abroad because that determines their own interest. They therefore often create mix-ups and promote wrong projects or materials. They also make promises which they cannot fulfil thereby creating bottlenecks in the decision making process. The local counterparts, acting in association with foreign principals often put up formidable fronts. Sometimes, they can establish contact at the highest decision making level to counteract any adverse (from their point of view) situation created by functionaries at lower levels.²¹

The aid regime thus has given rise to a syndrome of symbiotic relationships among donors and government decision makers and other influence groups including a class of local and foreign touts throwing in their entrepreneurship in aid brokerage. However, in this whole game, while the other groups derive certain benefits, shots are, in the ultimate analysis, called by those who hold the purse-strings—the donors.

Who is to be Blamed for Pervasive Donor Influence ?

Should one blame the donors for exercising the kind of influence they have come to exercise in Bangladesh ? Indeed, any rational person would promote his/her interest. And bilateral aid donors have their own foreign policy and commercial interests to promote, excess supplies of goods and commodities to export, excess production capacities to utilize and experts to employ. Naturally, and quite understandably, they would want to tailor their aid programmes to these ends. And to the extent they succeed, it should be to their credit. But they often pretend that they are only helping this country and not so much promoting their own interest, which is usually far from the truth. To the extent they behave this way they are not playing a straight game. To play a fair game, they should instead make their position clear as to how much aid they will provide to country like Bangladesh in a coming year and under what conditions. In so far as multilateral aid agencies such as the World Bank and IMF are concerned, these are in fact captive organizations of major contributors to their funds, whose biases, prejudices and interests naturally find expression in their operations and modus operandi. In the guise of professionalism, these organizations adopt rigid attitudes and impose strong conditionalities and exert far-reaching influences within that framework. This is the reality. But there is in fact hypocrisy involved in the operations of the multilateral aid agencies as they pretend to be free from

influences of political and commercial interests of particular countries

Such being the aid environment faced, it is up to the policy makers and aid negotiators of the recipient country to safeguard the national interests and viewpoints. There is the option to refuse to accept aid if it is contradictory and detrimental to the national interests and priorities. But is this a feasible option for Bangladesh? The question involves the class character and class interests of the power elites who are responsible for planning and implementing development, seeking, negotiating and accepting aid; and managing the affairs of the state and the government. A self-reliant strategy calls for fundamental structural changes in the economy and presupposes radical shifts in intellectual, social, cultural, economic and political processes of change based on conscientization, politicization and organization of the people at large. But such a strategy would adversely affect the interests of the power elites. They therefore are unlikely to adopt this course, and it appears that as long as they remain in control, the dependent development strategy with foreign aid at the centre stage and donor dictates pervading the development policies and strategies will continue to hold sway in this country.

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- 3 Annual aid disbursement in recent years has been of the order of US \$ 1 2-1 4 billion (See Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government of Bangladesh, *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh 1983*, p. 43). The total population in 1981 was 87 million according to 1981 Population Census, and the population growth rate has been estimated at 2.36 per cent per annum, which implies a population of 91 million in 1983 when the total aid disbursement was US \$ 1.84 billion giving a per capita aid receipt of about US \$ 15. However, other estimates show higher population figures.
- 4 L.F. Gorden "Aid Modalities in Bangladesh", presented at Aid Review Meeting for Bangladesh, Vienna, 30 March-10 April 1981
- 5 Q.K. Ahmad and M. Hossain, *Rural Poverty Alleviation in Bangladesh—Experiences and Policies*, FAO, Rome, February 1984. For some details on food aid and its consequences in Bangladesh one may see Q.K. Ahmad, "Contribution of Food Aid to Equitable Growth in Bangladesh", presented at the World Food Programme/Government of the Netherlands Seminar on Food Aid marking the Twentieth Anniversary of WFP, at the Hague, 3-5 October 1983, and published in *Report of the Conference*, WFP, Via Terme di Caracalla, Rome.
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- 7 *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh 1983*, op cit., p. 418
- 8 *Ibid*, p. 435 and 438.
- 9 Rehman Sobhani, *The Crises of External Dependence*, The Oxford University Press, Dhaka, 1982, p. 28
- 10 *Ibid*, p. 29
- 11 *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh 1983*, op cit. p. 370
- 12 *Ibid*, p. 370
- 13 *Ibid*, p. 398
- 14 *Ibid*, p. 401
- 15 Q.K. Ahmad and M. Hossain, op cit. Table 1, and *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh 1983*, op cit., p. 404
- 16 Report on Interim Evaluation of WFP-assisted project Bangladesh 2226 and Expansion, March 1980

- 17 Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, *The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85)*
- 18 *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh 1983*, *op cit* p 144 The figure is widely suspected to be higher than 120—perhaps 140 or more
- 19 *Ibid*, p 480
- 20 Q K Ahmad and M Hossain, "An Evaluation of Selected Policies and Programmes for Alleviation of Rural Poverty in Bangladesh", presented at the Regional Seminar on Monitoring poverty and Anti-poverty Policies in Rural Asia, sponsored jointly by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka, and ARTEP (ILO), Bangkok, held in Dhaka 7-9 April 1984
- 21 For certain examples of the operation of various interest groups in aid modality see Nurul Islam, "Interest Groups and Aid Conditionality", in Just Faaland (ed) *Aid and Influence*, *op cit*

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Imperialism in India

THE newly liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are involved in a struggle to break their links with the 'collective neo-colonialism' of the capitalist countries. The international class struggle of the newly liberated countries against the capitalist world is based on a solid historical experience that imperialist exploitation of colonies and semi-colonies distorted their development. The lesson of history that imperialism imposes a division of labour and mechanisms of exploitation over the colonised world is necessary but not a sufficient condition to create genuine anti-imperialist movements in the post-liberation phase of the erstwhile colonised world. Imperialism is operating in the newly liberated countries in a very sophisticated manner by identifying social classes and groups which legitimise foreign aid, foreign trade, import of foreign capital and technology in the name of national interest and goals of national economic development. Imperialism has identified many social constituencies which support imperialist penetration in the newly liberated countries, and contemporary neo-colonial exploitation is successful because it is based on the support of indigenous social groups which are sophisticated legitimisers, rationalisers and collaborators of imperialism. Every new social situation demands new strategies. Instead of direct physical and military domination, neo-colonialism has tried to gain acceptability in the newly liberated countries by creating a social base in indigenously powerful classes and groups and by sharpening conflicts and divisions among the dominant and powerful social classes in the newly liberated countries. In the light of this framework that neo-colonial strategies are more sophisticated than the old military type imperialism, it is worthwhile to examine the social constituencies of imperialism in the concrete context of India. The British colonial rule over India created many new things in our society, but two facts are relevant for the present discussion. First, India as a colony was structurally linked with the world capitalist system for imperialist exploitation. Second, colonial capitalism created an indigenous capitalist class which experienced new opportunities especially during the inter-war period and which experienced many objective obstructions in development because the Indian market was controlled by the British colonisers for the British capitalist class. This struggle for control over the Indian market created a contradiction between the British colonial power and the Indian capitalist class and the struggle brought about a negotiated

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transfer of power on 15 August 1947

India adopted the path of capitalist development after achieving independence but this path of development could not have been smooth because India was entering quite late in capitalist development and also in a phase when world capitalist system was itself facing a serious crisis. In spite of this objective hostile situation, the leading classes of India embarked on building capitalism in the country. The strategy of capitalist development of India was based on an active role by the Indian state in creating essential conditions for capitalist development and thus the Indian state and the Indian capitalist classes had to come to terms with imperialism by evolving policies on the role of foreign capital, foreign aid, trade and technology.

The public policy makers in India have always argued that we are operating in a framework of an inter-dependent world and we have diversified our sources of aid, trade and import of technology and by following this policy of diversification we have maintained a relative autonomy in world affairs. It would be worthwhile to examine the argument of diversification of the Indian public policy makers to understand the Indian reality.

The World Bank and its affiliates have been the most important source of funding for the Indian economic development. India has received US \$ 7.8 billion as IBRD loans during the last thirty-five years. Since 1960, India has received soft credit from the IDA amounting to US \$ 12.5 billion. Of this, the share of the agriculture and rural development sector was 13.6 per cent and that of the energy sector 30.2 per cent.

It may be clearly stated here that India's linkage with the World Bank has many ramifications and they cannot be just ignored by describing it as multilateral aid. The World Bank links India with the world capitalist system and sells its policies to the Indian public policy makers through its own opinion makers. Many of the erstwhile employees of the World Bank hold important positions in the Reserve Bank of India, in the Prime Minister's Secretariat, in the economic ministries of the Government of India and in the Planning Commission of India. By giving a large quantum of aid to India, the World Bank has created an important base in the decision-making mechanisms of the Government of India and this social constituency of the Bank in India sells the Bank's recipe of development to the Government. The World Bank operations in India are smooth because it has a base among economic planners and politico-bureaucratic decision makers in the country. The World Bank is an institution of the imperialist countries and it is a mechanism of 'collective neo-colonial' policies and its functioning is facilitated because its voices are heard favourably in the corridors of power in India. Such smooth sailing for the World Bank in India would not have been possible if it did not have a social base in the important ministries and autonomous organisations of the Government of India.

The I M F and the World Bank are twin brothers and when the Government of India went in for a large loan from the I M F, erstwhile employees of the Fund and the Bank were already occupying crucial positions in the

Government of India. When the humiliating conditionality clauses of the I.M.F. loan were criticised in India, the World Bank I.M.F. lobby in the corridors of power was very active in its defence. The patriotic protest against the I.M.F. loan was rejected by the powerful lobby of Indians which always extends its support to the Bank and I.M.F. operations in India.

The World Bank also adopts methods of misinformation to induce the Government of India and the private corporate sector to enter the western markets for commercial loans at exorbitant interest rates.

The World Bank Report observed

India, due to the inward orientation of its economy and inflow of external resources, including from I.B.R.D. and I.D.A., escaped the full brunt of adverse international factors. No doubt, India's total debt amounted to \$ 20 billion. This is about 7.3 per cent of the GNP. And service obligation has been around 7.2 per cent of export earnings. This ratio is relatively low as compared to other upper middle-income developing countries, such as Mexico, Argentina and South Korea. On the whole India's credit-worthiness is rated high.²

The above comment of the World Bank on India has a trap. It praises India for low level of dependence on foreign aid and it suggests that India can go further in borrowing from the capitalist countries. The result of this World Bank thinking and advice is that beginning with 1980, India has tapped commercial loans amounting to US \$ 6 billion mainly to finance NALCO, the National Thermal Power Corporation, O.N.G.C., and Air India. In spite of the World Bank's testimonial on the credit-worthiness of India in the international market, apprehensions have been expressed in India on commercial borrowing of US \$ one billion per year. In an editorial entitled "Undue optimism", the *Economic Times* observed

Commercial borrowing, unless backed by structural adjustment, will not provide us an escape route for long. It needs to be pointed out that debt servicing will have to be financed in convertible currencies, that is, out of trade outside Eastern Europe.³

With a trade deficit of Rs. 5,800 crores in 1983-84, which is unlikely to come down much in 1984-85, the credit-worthiness of India would be eroded if our reliance on external aid and borrowings increases. It may be stated here that debt service payments of India are on the increase, i.e., from Rs. 796 crores in 1978-79 to Rs. 1,025 crores in 1983-84.

Of late, collective neo-colonialism is in active operation in India which is reflected in our growing economic relations with the United States and Japan. The foundations for such a linkage were laid in the 50s, 60s and 70s, but in the 80s the trend is clear. While the two-way trade between India and the U.S. is more than U.S. \$ 3 billion, India is trying to expand its linkages with Japan. Both the Indo-U.S. Joint Commission and the Indo-Japanese Joint Commission are pressurising India to liberalise its trade, fiscal, investment, import and technological policies. The FICCI journal *Economic Trends* in an editorial on "India-Japan Trade and Economic Cooperation", observes

that an assurance was given to the Japanese businessmen by their Indian counterparts that a "qualitative and lasting change for the better" is taking place in the Government's economic policies and the journal says that this assurance was reinforced by three Government of India Secretaries, those in charge of Industrial Development, Commerce and Energy.

During the 80s, under international pressure applied by the I M F, the World Bank and other capitalist countries, India is opening its economy and liberalising the rules of foreign investment and import of technology. The recent trend of opening the Indian market to the world capitalist countries has local support. Many businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, and leading members of mass media are demanding that the Indian industry should become more competitive internationally and obsolete technology should be replaced by importing new technology. This is the political economy of the 80s and its significance needs probing. It is maintained in India that the high cost economy is the major factor responsible for the current economic crisis and for India's failure to raise its exports in the world market. A very important lobby has emerged in India which believes in export-led growth and Free Trade Zones where multinational corporations should be provided with facilities to earn foreign exchange for India through exports. The export-led growth is ultimately linked with an invitation to imperialism in India because multinationals have excellent marketing network and they have to be invited to give a push to foreign trade. The advocates of Free Trade Zones in India are in effect acting as lobbyists for imperialism in India because the Free Trade Zones need modern technology, investment and sensitivity to market requirements of the capitalist countries, which, only the multinational corporations possess. Thus the advocacy of the new economic strategy for India becomes synonymous with the advocacy of invitation to foreign capital and technology in India, and the distinction between Indian requirements and foreign intervention gets blurred.

The social constituencies of imperialism in India should be located in the politico-bureaucratic power structure and in the changing composition of the Indian capitalist classes.

During the last thirty-seven years, the Congress party has followed the capitalist path of development and it has promoted and defended in varying degrees the interests of the Indian Big Business, medium capitalists, landlords and the emerging capitalist farmers. The Congress party has controlled and guided the planning process of the country to expand and deepen the national market for exploitation by the capitalist classes. The Indian state, which is the most important instrument of the capitalist classes, has established many linkages with imperialism, while making many compromises with imperialism, it has many a time used its political power to resist imperialist pressures over India. The Congress party and leaders of the Indian capitalist classes were never committed to the idea of wholesale imperialist penetration into the Indian market. Many illustrations are available to prove that while the Government of India controlled by the Congress party and the Indian capitalist classes succumbed to imperialist pressures,

and provided opportunities to the imperialists to invest and operate in India, they also resisted imperialist pressures on many key issues. The devaluation of the Indian rupee in 1966 was done under imperialist pressure but the Government of India resisted the pressure of the late President Lyndon Johnson of the United States on our Viet Nam policy. India condemned and criticised the U.S. military intervention in Viet Nam and did not succumb to the U.S. pressure to change this policy in spite of our need for U.S. aid for food in 1966 and 1967.⁵

The Congress party and the Indian capitalist classes had opposed British imperialism and they had also made many compromises with British imperialism to achieve a negotiated transfer of power. This approach of the Congress party and the leading groups of the capitalist classes continued during the post-independence phase of Indian development. The Indian capitalist classes needed the support of the imperialist countries to build capitalism in India but at the same time they were not prepared to surrender the vast Indian market to the imperialists. The Big Business in India had a clear consciousness that imperialism cannot be given a *carte blanche* to operate in the Indian market. The Indian Big Business needed imperialist aid and help but was unwilling to reduce itself to the position of a junior partner to the world capitalist system. The Government of India controlled by the Congress party followed policies which were in harmony with the interests of the Indian Big Business and this policy was concretised during the last thirty-seven years. Thus we can discern two key ideas which informed the Congress party's perspective on India's linkage with imperialism, these were (a) linkages of India with imperialism for capitalist development were essential and (b) such linkages should be selective so that India does not become an appendage of imperialism and the Indian capitalist class does not become a junior partner of world capitalist system. The Indian market was meant for the Indian capitalist classes but many concessions were given to the imperialists to operate in India.

It may also be pointed out that the Congress party could not altogether ignore the pressure exerted on key issues by the radicalised masses, particularly those under the influence of the Communist movement. During the last thirty-seven years, the Communist movement in India and its trade unions have been consistently anti-imperialist in their outlook, policies and practice, and the Congress party was many times checked in following its pro-imperialist policies for fear of the Communist challenge. When India borrowed more than U.S. \$ 5 billions from the I.M.F. under the attendant conditionality clause, the Communist parties launched an offensive against it and the Congress party and the Government of India were hard pressed to defend the I.M.F. loan.

Continuity in the attitudes of the Congress party and the Indian capitalist classes towards imperialism, however, cannot be taken for granted because many changes are taking place in the Congress and the capitalist classes of India. A new leadership is emerging in the Congress party which is not a product of the phase of freedom struggle. The new leadership of the

Congress party is committed to capitalist development but it has no experience of the processes of development of the last thirty-seven years and this leadership is unaware of the Congress party's position on imperialism i.e., the position of compromise and resistance. Such a new leadership of the Congress party which lacks in historical consciousness of India's dealings with imperialism can create disastrous situations for the country. Apart from the change in the nature of leadership of the Congress party, many changes are also taking place in the social composition of the capitalist classes. Many capitalists have emerged at the second layer of the capitalist pyramid who were never involved in the national struggle for control over the Indian market; and these newly-sprung capitalists are very enthusiastic about foreign collaboration in India. The Modi Tyres, the Modi Xerox are prospering in India because of foreign collaboration and such capitalists are an important new social constituency for imperialism in India. The new leadership of the Congress party which is not a product of the anti-imperialist phase of Indian national struggle and the new second-layer capitalists who have emerged during the last thirty-seven years may provide new opportunities to the imperialists in India. It should be clearly understood that Indian politics as represented by the new leadership of the Congress party and the emerging capitalist groups may bring about a drastic change in India's relationship with the world capitalist countries in the name of modernisation of industry, accelerating the rate of growth etc. and they may push India towards imperialism for the import of sophisticated technology and foreign investments.

Moreover, during the last thirty-seven years a very important social base for imperialism in India is provided by the emerging middle classes which occupy an important place in bureaucratic decision-making structures of India. The higher echelons of bureaucracy are not capitalists but they are linked with capitalist development as its regulators and beneficiaries. Many important bureaucrats have direct interests in capitalist enterprises because their sons are employed in the private corporate sector and also because retired bureaucrats are employed by many Indian and foreign capitalists. K. B. Lal, a former Indian ambassador to the E. E. C., and S. Boothalingam, a former Finance Secretary of the Government of India, are Chairmen of Guest Keen Williams and Glaxo Ltd., respectively. Many bureaucrats are linked with multinational corporations and they become their defenders. A very important social constituency of imperialism in India is the Indian bureaucracy because it sees many job prospects in the World Bank, I. M. F. and multinational corporations. Since the bureaucracy plays a crucial role in the management of the production system of India, imperialism has consciously attempted to win over-sections of the bureaucracy, and these sections are willing to extend their support to imperialism. The Indian bureaucrats negotiate with imperialism for the transfer of technology and they play a crucial role in approving agreements for foreign investment and collaboration. The imperialist countries employ many techniques for winning the support of bureaucrats, those willing to extend

their support, for example, are offered as a *quid pro quo* lucrative jobs and other, incidental benefits. Using such techniques imperialism has penetrated the decision-making structures of the Indian Government and the bureaucracy provides a very hospitable atmosphere to imperialism.⁶ Further, the Government of India's policy of diversification of the sources of aid, trade, import of technology and of foreign investment has provided an opportunity to all the capitalist countries to establish their lobbies in India. Such a proliferation of lobbies of the various capitalist countries has brought many groups of the Indian middle classes under the influence of imperialism. The Indian lobbyists of foreign capital are linked with the politico-bureaucratic decision-making apparatus and they operate as defenders and promoters of the interests of imperialism in the country.

Thus, the social base of imperialism in India is in the new leadership of the Congress party, in the rising bourgeoisie which has become prosperous during the last thirty-seven years with the assistance of foreign collaboration, the commercial bourgeoisie which is primarily involved in foreign trade, the bureaucracy which is attracted towards imperialism and multinational corporations for jobs and re-employment after retirement and the middle classes which are finding the job of lobbying for imperialism a lucrative business. The attitudes of all these segments of society towards imperialism should be distinguished from that of the typical old Big Business houses, which invite imperialism but also resist its penetration so that the Indian market is not conquered by the imperialists. It is these segments which constitute the comprador element in Indian society.

An important pillar of post-independence capitalist development and the struggle against imperialism was the relation between India and the Soviet Union. Trade with the Soviet Union, for instance, starting from a mere Rs. 30 crores, has crossed the Rs. 3,800 crore mark in the course of the last thirty years. The Indo-Soviet economic relations provide an important base for the Indian ruling classes to bargain with imperialism and fight against imperialist penetration in India. The western capitalist countries have developed powerful lobbies in the politico-bureaucratic structure in India which resist the growth of Indo-Soviet cooperation. This is clearly observable in the field of import of technology. During the last thirty seven years, India has entered into 8,000 technological agreements with the capitalist countries, and the lobbyists for imperialism in the bureaucracy always show preference for technology from the imperialist countries as against the socialist countries. This is the success of imperialism, which is forever making an open or concealed onslaught on technological cooperation between India and the Soviet Union.⁷

To sum up, during the last thirty seven years new groups and social forces have emerged which provide important social constituencies for imperialism in India. Among these can be listed the rising second-layer bourgeoisie, segments of the Indian bureaucracy, sections of the Indian middle classes and the new leadership of the Congress Party. India is very important for imperialism because it is a huge market but the Indian capitalist

classes will not easily surrender the control of Indian market to the world capitalist countries. If imperialism has to succeed in India, it has to identify social groups which would legitimise and welcome imperialism. It is in this context that the emergence of this constituency mentioned above acquires crucial importance.

- 1 For a good discussion see Yuri Popov *Essays in Political Economy: Imperialism and the Developing Countries*, Moscow, Progress publishers, 1984.
Also see Ye. M. Primkov *The East after the Collapse of the Colonial System* Moscow, Nauka Publishing House, 1983.
- 2 *World Bank Report*, Economic Trends, Delhi, FICCI, Vol XIII, No 19, 1, October 1984, P.3.
- 3 *Economic Times* Bombay, 2 October 1984.
- 4 "India-Japan Trade and Economic Cooperation" in *Economic Trends* Vol XIII, No 24, December 16, 1984, New Delhi, p 3.
- 5 See Lloyd I. Rudolph et al. *The Regional Imperative: U.S. Foreign Policy Towards South Asian States*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1980.
- 6 See C. P. Bhambhani, *Bureaucracy and Politics in India*, Vikas, Delhi, 1970.
- 7 See Baldev Raj Nayar, *India's Quest for Technological Independence*, Vol I, Policy Foundation and Policy Change: The Results of Policy, Vol II New Delhi, Lancers Publishers, 1983.

NOTE

A Fresh Look at the Jaintia Rebellion

THE JAINTIA HILLS, situated in north-east India and at present a constituent of the state of Meghalaya, became a British territory in 1835. In that year the Raja of Jaintia, Rajendra Singh, was deposed on the charge of complicity with some of his subjects, who, it was alleged, had carried off three British officers and barbarously sacrificed them at the shrine of goddess Kali. The plains portion of his territory was consequently annexed by the British, while the hilly portion was given up voluntarily by the Raja himself as he was unwilling to rule over a truncated country. The deposed king was removed to Sylhet and a pension of Rs. 500 a month was given to him till his death in 1861. The country thus resumed contained nineteen petty districts (or villages), fifteen of which were each under a *doloi* (headman) elected by the villagers themselves, the rest managed by hereditary *sardars*.

Though the hills possessed enough natural resources, the British, for about a decade, did not make any attempt to harness them. The policy of the government, during this period, was one of complete non-interference in the internal matter of the country. No administrative change was conceived of and the people were virtually left undisturbed. The former practice of receiving a he-goat and a few seers of parched rice once a year from each village as tribute was also retained unaltered.

The near-independent status of the Syntengs (the name by which the Jaintias were known) did not last long as steps were soon taken to bring them under more effective control of the British. Early in 1849 a proposal was made by Capt. Lister, the Political Officer, to extend the scope of taxation in the hills by the imposition of a house tax "in consequence of the disposition evinced by some of the people to assert their independence".¹ In 1853 A.J.M. Mills, judge of the *Sudder Dewani Adalat*, on deputation to Khasi and Jaintia Hills, advocated a house tax. "We have acted unwisely and inequitably", argued Mills, "when in the neighbouring hills house tax was paid." He further suggested that a *thana* (police station) was to be immediately set up so that a strict vigilance on the unruly conduct of some of the people could be maintained.² Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, though he accepted Mills' recommendations, took no step to implement them except asking the Agent to the Governor-General in North-East India to proceed to the Jaintia hills and to prepare a full report on revenue, civil and criminal justice and all other related matters.³ In his elaborate report on the Khasi and Jaintia hills,

W.J Allen, Member of the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces, also recommended a moderate house tax. He wrote :

I am of opinion that a light and judicious taxation would contribute to the preservation of tranquility and good order in the Jynteah Hills. A moderate taxation had very beneficial effect upon the savagery of the Lurka Coles of the Singhbhoom district of the south-west frontier agency. It was found to make them less turbulent and aggressive, and more thrifty, diligent, and submissive to the authorities; and I am disposed to think that a very moderate taxation, fixed for a term of years would improve the condition and strengthen the peaceful and industrious inclinations of these wild mountaineers also.⁴

Allen further proposed that in order to administer justice and to check the lawless conduct of the *dollas* a European civil officer should be stationed at the centre of the hills.⁵ Though the proposal of imposing a house tax was favourably considered no step was taken to implement his second recommendation, and consequently the Syntengs were left as before to the management of the village headmen.

In 1860 the house tax was first introduced, the highest limit of which was fixed at one rupee a house. This measure of direct taxation, though nominal, wounded the feelings of the hillmen. The people came out openly and in different meetings resolved to resist its payment. Within a few months the whole tribe was in a fierce rebellion which however was promptly stamped out before the rebels could make much headway.⁶ In the wake of the revolt security measures throughout the hills were tightened. Civil officers were given powers to dismiss the *dollas* for misconduct and the policemen at Jowai (headquarters of the hills) and elsewhere were instructed to take due cognizance of all complaints against the villagers. Peace, however, did not return as quickly as was expected. Towards the close of 1860 new taxation was introduced in the form of judicial stamps. But nothing had so badly disturbed the people as the income tax which was first introduced in the Jaintia hills in 1861. It is true that the incidence of the tax on income was extremely insignificant. It was reported that 310 persons were actually assessed and the amount derived was Rs. 1,259 only. The highest tax levied, and that too in only one case, was Rs 9; another person was assessed at Rs 5, twenty at Rs 4 and 8 annas and the rest were taxed at the minimum rate, viz. Rs 4 a year.⁷ But this impost, quickly succeeding the house tax and the stamp revenue, produced the deepest indignation among the people who had paid nothing as tax for generations. Be that as it may, on 17 January 1862 the Syntengs numbering about six hundred marched to Jowai and burnt down the Christian settlement there. Major E A Rowlatt, Deputy Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills, partially succeeded in repulsing the insurgents and destroyed most of their stockades.⁸ The hard core of the rebels, however, remained as active as before. The people "though armed with bows and arrows, fought bravely for their independence". Under U Kiang Nongbah, the rebellion soon assumed the character of a war of liberation and, it was with great difficulty that the situation could finally be brought under control.

"Crushed apparently in four months after its outbreak, it again almost immediately burst out afresh, and it was not till November 1863 that the last of the rebel leaders surrendered, and the pacification of Jaintia could be said to be complete"⁹

What were then the real causes of the rebellion? Was it really the outcome of the various taxes introduced or were its causes far more deep-rooted than appeared to contemporary officialdom? The course of events culminating in the rebellion continues to intrigue the present-day historians working on the history and politics of north-east India, many of whom are inclined to accept the official explanation that the disturbances were entirely due to the financial measures and that the imposition of taxes, particularly income tax, on a people unaccustomed to such payment was "unwise and inexpedient". Tracing the causes of the outbreak J. C. Haughton, the Officiating Agent to the Governor-General, remarked: "Taxation was introduced without supervision. It was followed up by fresh taxation, and rumours of other taxes."¹⁰ He believed that though the people in general were in a position to pay the tax, its introduction on a people who could furnish no accurate account of their income was a myopic act, "the tax practically became one on property and not on income and it was exacted from many who should have been exempted in the spirit of the section 130 of the Income-tax Act."¹¹ It was not Haughton alone but a band of other English civil and military officers serving in north-east India also entertained such an opinion and felt that taxation, particularly income tax, was the root cause of the outbreak.

There is perhaps very little doubt that the Syntengs were naturally annoyed as "imposts of one sort or another were in fact appearing like mushrooms." It is also an undeniable fact that the introduction of income tax had further aggravated the situation. But still it is doubtful if taxation alone could have sparked off the rebellion had there been no other combustible material long hidden underneath. Had income tax been a potent factor the rebellion would have automatically subsided as soon as it was withdrawn. It is to be noted here that when income tax was first levied in the Jaintia hills no hostility was witnessed and the tax for the first year was paid without a murmur. The Deputy Commissioner of the district travelled extensively through the hills in 1861 but no visible sign of disaffection was witnessed.¹² It has already been stated that the amount realised from income tax was trivial and there was no reason why the entire tribe should have been at war for a cause which affected only a small percentage of them directly.

Against this backdrop of events let us now review the whole history of British relations with Jaintia from 1835 to 1860. Unlike many other hill tribes of north-east India the Jaintias were politically and militarily an advanced people. In the medieval times the Jaintia kingdom included a large slice of Assam's Nowgong district and some parts of the district of Sylhet (now in Bangladesh). They had a long history of trade relations with Bengal and Jayantipur, their capital, was the "great entrepot in which all commercial dealings are transacted between the inhabitants of the plains and hills."¹³

Though in the following centuries their kingdom had been considerably reduced in size, the Jaintias were by no means an insignificant people when the British took possession of their country in 1835. Proud of their culture and heritage, the Syntengs, quite understandably, found it difficult to reconcile themselves to their fate. Early British officers in the Jaintia hills could easily gauge the feelings of the people and desisted from doing anything which could aggravate matters. But, as seen already, the policy of the government was soon reversed and steps were taken to establish British paramountcy both in name and in practice. The ease with which some of the turbulent tribes like the Khamtis and the Matakis, living in the north-eastern extremity, had in the meanwhile been subjugated, made the British confident of their success against the Jaintias. However, calculations in the latter case proved wrong. Be that as it may, the worst sufferers of the change in policy in the Jaintia hills were the village headmen—the *dollos* and the *sardars*. Hitherto these leaders exercised considerable influence over the people. They heard all civil cases, and to a certain degree, criminal complaints, i.e., those which did not relate to heinous crimes. They also held most of the *raj* (crown) lands without payment of revenue. This semi-independent status of the village leadership was, however, gradually coming to an end. With the progress of British administration, the aristocracy started discovering, to their utter dissatisfaction, that the powers and privileges they had hitherto enjoyed had all been abolished and they were reduced to the status of mere commoners. The very presence of a *daroga* (police officer) in their midst made their position extremely degrading. The changing situation put them completely at the mercy of government officials without whose support they could not expect to hold office though elected by their own people.

While the position of the aristocracy was one of gradual decline, the condition was no better for the mass of the people in the Jaintia hills. The masses, who had never been under anybody except their own Rajas, were obviously perturbed when their king was removed from his country and British administration was substituted. Undoubtedly, a section of them, however unhappy, not only acquiesced in the 'foreign' rule but vainly waited for a brighter new era. Their hopes were soon belied and as soon as the flashes of enthusiasm had died down discontent with 'alien' rule quickly became manifest. It was not merely the fiscal measures which were responsible for the large-scale discontent of the masses. "It appears doubtful", Brigadier-General C. D. Showers, in charge of civil and military administration of Jaintia hills during the period of the insurgency, remarked, "whether the feelings of the people would have broken out into open violence unless they had been aggravated by acts of local authorities."¹⁴ Needless to say, not only was corruption rampant in the court, but there had also been numerous instances of harassment and oppression of the ligants by the native officials.¹⁵ This was testified to by none other than the Officiating Agent himself when he said: "With few exceptions, they (the Syntengs) did not know a word of the court language and all, as ignorant of laws, entirely dependent on and at the mercy of the native officials who did not hesitate to grow rich at

their expense”¹⁶ The situation was further aggravated by a number of ill-conceived and unpopular measures introduced by Major Rowlatt, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, who unfortunately was found to have been more preoccupied with the supervision of the Shillong-Guwahati road, which was then under construction, than with the affairs of Jaintia.¹⁷ One such measure was the prohibition against burning the dead in the immediate vicinity of the town of Jowai and the order to shift the cremation ground from the old site to a remote locality. This order though issued on sanitary considerations was interpreted by the people who had time and again expressed strongest resentment against the activities of the Christian Mission as yet another sinister attempt to malign their religion, and eventually had the effect of inciting them into rebellion. Soon after the first outbreak of 1860 Major Rowlatt badly wounded the sentiments of the people by attempting to disarm them by confiscating their swords and shields. It is to be noted here that most of the hill tribes of north-east India had the habit of carrying arms with them. These were not necessarily meant for attack but for self-defence, and their utility was perhaps greater in a region full of jungles and infested with wild animals. Moreover, in some religious ceremonies dancing with arms or displaying them for public view was a common practice. Naturally, therefore, the people were greatly alarmed when the overzealous Deputy Commissioner tried to unnecessarily break their swords and burn their shields thus earning for him the nickname, the ‘shield-breaker’.

The worst came soon after. In November 1861 a big religious festival was held at Jalong, on the outskirts of Jowai, which was attended by many thousand villagers. The Deputy Commissioner, on receipt of an information that a large quantity of swords and spears had been collected for the purpose, asked the police to take appropriate steps. While the *pooja* was going on the police arrived on the scene and without any provocation from the spectators started seizing the arms, the organisers were thereupon forced to abandon the ceremony. This was certainly an uncalled-for action which could have been avoided with a little bit of tact and prudence. “Their former grievances”, wrote Rev T. Jones, “were as heaps of powder in all directions, and the *daroga* there applied the torch to them and set the whole country ablaze.”¹⁸ Thus the entire community, which had been under constant apprehension for some time, had been driven into a fierce rebellion, which naturally appeared to them to be the only possible alternative for them to preserve their identity from the systematic attack of the foreigners. The police excesses at Jalong, therefore, had the effect of adding fuel to the fire. Soon the public fury was transformed into a full-fledged revolt against the British. Brisk preparations were made to fight on a grandiose scale by collecting arms, erecting stockades and sending out emissaries for aid.¹⁹ The *dollos* and the *sardars*, having suffered terribly under the British, made common cause with the rest of the population, and before long the movement began to assume the character of a mass movement for the ouster of the hated *dykhais* (foreigners).

It is thus clear that the Jaintia rebellion was not entirely due to the finan-

cial measures of the government²⁰ For a long time a feeling of insecurity and restlessness had gripped the people of the Jaintia hills, who, for the reasons mentioned above, could not completely reconcile themselves to the British administration during the twenty-five years after the occupation of their country in 1835. As observed by a contemporary "The Jaintias had never reconciled to the way in which their country was taken possession of by the British Government. Many of them look upon this as a piece of treachery as a thing to be avenged whenever the opportunity offered itself."²¹ In spite of this the authorities paid little attention to their distress and grossly undermined their strength and status by indulging in a series of indiscreet and unpopular experiments. Rightly or wrongly, therefore, the people had formed an opinion that they had been neglected and oppressed and that they would not get a fair treatment from their masters as long as the latter lived in the hills. Shortly before the rebellion, in October 1861, the ryots at Phulaguri in the Nowgong district of Assam demonstrated their resentment against certain governmental measures by organising a mass rally of peasants and there was no reason why, the Syntengs thought, they could not emulate the strength and determination of the people living on the other side of their country's border. The words of the Commissioner of the province are worth quoting in this context "A people who had neither been left to their own guidance, nor yet fairly brought under ours, upon whom our yoke had pressed with just sufficient force to gall, but not to break into order, who had been denied the boon of having our rule represented among them by an English Officer, and of all our institutions, who had known only our system of Police as illustrated in taxation, when such a people rise in rebellion it may not be difficult to explain its origin and object, without searching after recedite causes."²²

It is an undeniable fact that the whole history of the relationship of the British with the Syntengs had created an explosive situation and the unpopular acts of Major Rowlatt provided the immediate spark for the rebellion.²³

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- 1 The people of the hills in north-east India were accustomed to shifting cultivation and hence it was not possible to assess them individually. It was perhaps because of this difficulty that a house tax was recommended.
- 2 *An Account of the Province of Assam and its Administration*, Shillong 1903, p. 72.
- 3 A Mackenzie *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal*, Calcutta 1884, p. 240.
- 4 W. J. Allen "Report on the Administration of the Cosseah and Jynteah Hill Territory, in *Selection of Records, Government of Bengal*, vol. xvii, Calcutta, 1864.
- 5 *Ibid*.
- 6 A Mackenzie *Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal*, Calcutta 1869, p. 27.
- 7 *Ibid*, p. 28.
- 8 Bengal Judicial Proceedings (hereafter BJP), October, 1862, No. 98, Dunsford to Showers, 15 March, 1862.
- 9 *An Account of the Province of Assam and its Administration*, Shillong, 1903, p. 72.

COMMUNICATION

Modes of Power . Some Clarifications

IT IS INDEED gratifying for those involved in the preparation of *Subaltern Studies II* that their efforts have provoked such an enthusiastic and stimulating critical review by a group of young Marxist scholars in the pages of *Social Scientist* (137, October 1984). Perhaps because of the relative novelty of many of the theoretical and methodological issues raised by different articles in this series of writings, and also the inherent complexity of the problems which large agrarian societies like India have always posed for Marxist analysts beginning from Karl Marx himself, there nevertheless exists a great deal of confusion regarding the terms of the debate. Only continuing discussions can lead to a more consistent demarcation of these terms. This note seeks to clarify some of the issues raised by the reviewers (in Section IX of their review) regarding my article 'More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry'. Despite the unquestioned seriousness of their critical endeavour, the reviewers have unfortunately made some fundamental errors in judging my theoretical intentions.

First of all, my exercise is quite firmly rooted in the theoretical ground of social analysis prepared by Marx. Therefore, I do not for a moment challenge the elementary formulation that a mode of production is defined by a special combination of the forces and the relations of production. On the contrary, I suggest that a critique can be made of a large part of Marxist historical writing, in India and elsewhere, precisely because it violates this fundamental definition and proceeds as though the forces of production were an autonomous determinant of historical change. How often have we heard that such and such a change in economic structure or social organisation occurred because of the 'emergence' of a 'superior' or 'more productive' technology? Can we not show in the 'transition' literature on virtually every country in the world the belief, explicit or implicit, that capitalism must inevitably triumph *because*—and this is the fundamental determinant—it had historically demonstrated the capacity to achieve a 'superior level of development' of the productive forces, or that it had not triumphed yet *because* no significant increase of the productive forces could be observed? That is techno-economic determinism. And should it seem that this is merely an occasional aberrant tendency in Marxist historiography, it would be worth our while to consider a methodological work such as G. A. Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford, 1978) which encompasses with much lucidity

and logical rigour a great deal of what passes for 'orthodox' Marxist wisdom. That is an interpretation of Marx's method which I quite firmly reject, for it offers the illusory hope that the theoretical (and—need I add?—praxiological) problems posed by the concept of the mode of production as a specific combination of the forces and the relations of production can be circumvented by resort to some linear 'law of history'. It is ridiculous to suggest, as the reviewers do, that I would regard Marx's treatment of the immediate process of production, in *Capital*, volume 1, as an instance of 'techno-economic determinism'. Marx's discussion was located within a very carefully defined theoretical problem regarding the critical analysis of capitalist production. He did not pretend that a study of the immediate process of production would enable us to read off as it were the specific characteristics of, say, the capitalist state or bourgeois ideology or proletarian consciousness.

Consequently, my plea that we devote greater attention than hitherto towards developing appropriate concepts for analysing the different aspects of the social relations of production is not an argument for substituting a 'one-dimensional study' of power in place of the central emphasis that we now give to the concept of the mode of production. Rather it is an argument against the common tendency to reduce historical explanation in terms of the mode of production to a single dimension of change, that of the forces of production. It is a plea to restore to the concept of the mode of production its potential richness as a basic tool of analysis and to accept the theoretical challenge it poses.

It is the central misunderstanding that the concept of the mode of power is intended to replace the concept of the mode of production which leads the reviewers to their subsequent criticisms of my article. For instance, they say that when I describe the 'property connection' I mean 'property in its legal-juridical sense'. But that can hardly be true for I state quite clearly that the analysis of the property connection will concern 'the question of rights or entitlements in society, of the resultant power relationships, of law and politics, of the process of legitimization of power relations, etc.' which certainly describes an area far larger than 'property in its legal-juridical sense'. In fact, one of the main implications of the mode of power analysis will be our ability to make the distinction between state power and class power and thus to study situation in which the two do not necessarily coincide.

The reviewers then go on to announce that 'political-juridical structures' are 'part of the superstructure' whereas 'the structure of production relations' is surely 'internal to the economic infrastructure' and that therefore the analysis of the former can hardly have any role to play in the strict analysis of the latter. (Of course, if they mean that an analysis of 'political-juridical structures' cannot be a substitute for the analysis of 'the structure of production relations', then the objection is irrelevant for that is not what I seek to do anyway.) They also declare that 'the political and ideological levels' are determined 'in the last instance' by 'the economic level', presumably meaning thereby that the possibilities of the political or the ideological instance conditioning the economic can be treated as problems of a subordinate order.

residual level of explanation and not of central importance to the way in which we conceptualise the relations of production which must necessarily be contained within the economic infrastructure

And yet they suggest at the same time that the relations of production must be seen not merely as a technical 'division of labour' but as 'social relations of production'. Now, there is no way that *social* relations of production can be completely defined at what the reviewers call 'the economic level'. In fact, the very concept of the social relations of production must necessarily undermine the usefulness of the base/superstructure distinction. For if we acknowledge that there are political or ideological aspects of the social relations of production and that those aspects cannot be reduced to the economic, then the question of the relations between the different aspects of the social relations of production must be posed as one not of linear determinations by 'the economic level' but of mutual conditioning of one instance by another within a particular mode of production. And if one insists that 'the economic level' determines the others 'in the last instance', one must be careful in defining what one means by this. Quite often this is interpreted in a chronological sense, as a determination which occurs last in time, so that all evidences of the conditioning of the economic instance by the political or the ideological are treated as signifying relations of a transitional or ephemeral nature and that 'in the end' it is the economic level which must determine. To this, of course, the objection has been made that since in the diachronic sense every social formation is always in transition, the last instance can be pushed forward indefinitely in the future: the last instance, in other words, never comes. I do not think this is a valid way of interpreting Engels's famous formulation. A far more useful way is to conceive of the different instances of a social formation as mutually conditioning one another, of those relations acquiring a specific systematic form within a particular mode of production, and of the possibility arising of a 'non-economic' instance such as the political or the cultural-ideological becoming the structure in dominance in determining the conditions of reproduction within particular modes of production. In that case, since it is the very concept of the mode of production which enables us to tell whether a structure such as kinship or the state will be in dominance in the primitive communist or the feudal mode of production, we could say in a methodological rather than ontological sense that the economic determines in the last instance. This will, of course, mean that the base/superstructure metaphor will become theoretically irrelevant.

There are many other points where the reviewers do not bother to think carefully about the problem I have sought to raise. Take the case of the political aspect of the social relations of production, an aspect which the reviewers casually dismiss as merely 'legal-juridical'. What bearing does the political instance have on the social relations of production? No mode of production can be defined without specifying the respective rights over the means of production of labourers and non-labourers in society. Are these rights to be specified in terms of the 'legal-juridical' structures? In the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, the famous text in which the base/

superstructure distinction also occurs, Marx talks of the relations of production 'or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—the property relations'. How are we to interpret this remark that the property relations are only the legal expression of the relations of production, something which the reviewers seem hesitant to accept? It would mean obviously that each can stand in the place of the other, that if we knew which particular mode of production we were confronted with, then by knowing the property relations we could tell what the relations of production are, and vice versa. And this happens because in the synchronous concept of the mode of production, each instance *corresponds* to every other—they are in harmony. If the dynamic synchrony of a mode of production, i.e., specifying the conditions of reproduction of its structure, was all we were interested in, then the several instances of a social formation would not pose any problem at all.

But obviously that is not the case. The reviewers are in fact quite justified in their scepticism in accepting the 'legal-juridical' form of property as an index of the relations of production. For as soon as we move into the terrain of historical explanation, i.e. the analysis of transition, we would necessarily be confronted with the problem of *non-correspondence* of the different instance, of contradictions, of antagonism and non-antagonism. And that is precisely where the question would arise of our being able to conceptualise each instance in its relative autonomy. Merely to say that we must look at the social relations of production in all its aspects or that each instance of a social formation is relatively autonomous of the others does not resolve the theoretical problem—it merely opens it up. That is the area where Marx himself in his historical writings, and most notably Lenin, have made seminal contributions.

The 1859 Preface formulates this problem of non-correspondence as the contradiction between the forces and the relations of production. I do not think this is adequate for either historical or praxiological analysis. I would argue that the entire theoretical lineage from the later Marx to Lenin, Gramsci and Mao, and the fundamental strength of this tradition in comparison with that of the Second International 'orthodoxy' of Plekhanov, Bernstein and Kautsky, testifies to this inadequacy. But that is a long story which I cannot go into here. All I need for the moment is the admission that in developing a method for analysing historical transitions, using the concept of the mode of production as the basic tool for 'cutting up' the process of historical development into synchronous states of the structure, we must examine in their concreteness the relations of mutual conditioning among the different instances of a historical social formation. For this we must have adequate means of conceptualising each instance—the economic, the political, the cultural-ideological—as an autonomously constituted theoretical field. It is in this context, as a preliminary conceptualisation of the *political* instance, that the concept of the mode of power is offered.

The mode of power is not therefore intended to replace the concept of the mode of production as a means of periodising history or classifying historical social formations. It seeks to develop a conceptual tool for analysing

one, viz the political, aspect of *transitions* from one mode of production to another. Since the reviewers fail to appreciate the importance of this problem, they go to unnecessary lengths to prove, as a counter to my formulation, or so at least they think, that slavery and serfdom cannot be analysed in terms of the same mode of production. They would have done better if they had only stopped for a while to ponder about why anyone should want to say a silly thing like that. Perhaps then they might have discovered that 'societies' do not 'fall under' one or the other mode of power. The concept is meant to provide a tool for analysing the forms which the political relation of domination/resistance takes in particular modes of production and in the transition from one mode of production to another, and that in the case of the slave or the feudal mode of production these political forms can be studied in terms of the contradictory combination of two modes of power, the form of the combination varying in the two cases, i.e. slavery and serfdom.

There are two further points which need to be made regarding the reviewers' comments on the notion of 'community' and my formulation of the communal mode of power. It is remarkable how close the reviewers come to the main problem without acknowledging that it needs to be theoretically posed. For they have discussed at some length various formulations of Marx to show, in their words, that 'according to Marx, all pre-capitalist modes of production were based on the community' (p. 34). 'Based on' is a rather problematical term here, for the reviewers have throughout insisted that the 'base' must be defined by the forces and the relations of an invariant 'community' constituting the 'base' for *all* pre-capitalist modes of production. Yet there is something important here in the relationship which Marx observes between pre-capitalist modes and the allocation and legitimation of 'property' rights over the means of production in terms of a community. The reviewers also mention the fundamental formulation of Marx that the difference between pre-capitalist modes of production and the capitalist mode lies in the absence in the former of a separation of the labourer from the means of labour. If one relates this proposition to the existence of something called the 'community' in all pre-capitalist modes, a whole range of problems open up in analysing the political forms through which rights over the means of production are established in pre-capitalist social formations. In seeking to tackle these problems one is not, as the reviewers suggest, 'jumping to the communal mode of power', one is merely identifying the ground from which the next theoretical step can be taken. But to do this, one must first recognise that there is here a theoretical problem to be posed. Merely to say that in pre-capitalist modes of production there is a 'natural unity between the labourer and his means of production' does not get us anywhere. It also prevents us from seeing the importance of the new theoretical thrust in Marx's own researches in his last years, most notably in the drafts to his reply to Vera Zasulich, his critiques of Morgan, Maine and Phear in the *Ethnological Notebooks*, and in the *Chronological Notes*.

There is a second reason why the reviewers do not appreciate the impor-

tance of posing the problem of the community in fixing property rights in pre-capitalist formations. They harbour a quite unfounded prejudice that 'community' must necessarily imply some sort of egalitarianism and absence of exploitation. So strong is their suspicion on this score that they even found my references to Evans-Pritchard and the segmentary lineage theorists 'appreciative', which is astounding, to say the least. It is obvious that the functionalism of this school of anthropology can hardly provide a theory of the evolution of classes in lineage society, which was the entire context of my discussion. I find it incomprehensible that this body of theory should seem consistent with my clearly stated position that the political forms of *all* pre-capitalist societies must be studied in relation to the historically evolved opposition between classes, the implication being that the analysis of classless societies *pre se* is theoretically meaningless if not situated in relation to that history.

The reviewers also mention in this connection the omission from my discussion of the debate among French anthropologists in the 1970s regarding the evolution of classes in lineage societies. I left out this discussion from my paper in *Subaltern Studies II* primarily for reasons of space, for it would have required a long and detailed treatment. But I also have the feeling that this debate between Claude Meillassoux, Emmanuel Terray, Pierre-Phillippe Rey, Maurice Godelier and others, while being greatly illuminating on many points, has remained curiously indecisive in many fundamental respects. Meillassoux's original argument was in terms of 'self-sufficient' societies with exchange in non-subsistence goods only, with hunting societies being distinguished in evolutionary terms from agricultural societies because land is only a subject of labour in the former whereas it becomes an instrument of labour in the latter, and with an incipient differentiation emerging in lineage societies based on agriculture in terms of age-grades. Terray distinguished between lineage society based on simple cooperation and tribal-village societies with complex cooperation, but in both kinship was the structure in dominance determining the conditions of reproduction. Rey, on the other hand, proposed a separate 'lineage mode of production' with the political instance in dominance controlling the circulation of producers and of women and with elders exploiting juniors. This, in other words, was already class society proper. Godelier rejected Rey's formulation as much too narrow and insisted that it was kinship rather than a specifically political institution which was the structure in dominance in lineage societies, that in fact kinship acted as the relations of production and in 'orthodox' terminology kinship there would have to be called both base and superstructure. Godelier also went on to make the important point that although in many lineage societies it was the distinction into age-grades as a means of establishing 'functional authority' which acted as the basis for the later emergence of classes, there was in fact a great variation in the forms of 'property' in such societies and there was no single primitive communist mode of production which could satisfactorily encompass all these variations. He also noted that when classes did emerge, they often appeared

to rest on a non-economic basis, such as the distinction of elders and juniors or male and female

It seems to me that a satisfactory resolution of this debate crucially hinges on our ability to adequately conceptualise the political and the cultural-ideological instances of a social formation in their relations to the economic instance. In the particular case of the formation of classes in lineage societies, this will necessarily mean a *concrete* conceptualisation of the community and its relation to a specifically political institution such as the state. Marxist anthropologists have made a number of observations in this regard which are specific, *ad hoc* and limited. I do not think a satisfactory conceptualisation of the community or the state in the evolution of lineage societies has yet emerged.

My fundamental argument then is that an explicit conceptualisation of the political instance of social formations (as also the ideological-cultural instance) is essential if we are to address ourselves to the problem of the *transition* from one mode of production to another. I reject the view which asserts that the political forms are merely aspects of the 'superstructure' and thus have only a residual role to play in historical analysis in terms of the mode of production. I also believe that such a view can be shown to be fundamentally inconsistent with Marx's own discussions of the transition problem in several places in his later work. Take, for instance, Marx's identification of the fundamental difference between the Asiatic and the feudal mode of production. It is a different matter altogether to judge whether the concept of the Asiatic mode of production is useful in understanding the histories of countries such as India or whether Marx's evidence on these countries was accurate or adequate. But there is no doubt that Marx repeatedly located the fundamental difference in the absence of a notion of 'private property' in the Asiatic mode. To say that this was merely a difference in the 'legal-juridical form' of the rights over the means of production would lead us to the sort of mechanistic classificatory scheme drawn up by, say, Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst in their *Pre-capitalist Modes of Production* (London, 1977) in which they concluded that the Asiatic mode could not be defined as a distinct mode of production. The fact is that the difference in the so-called 'legal' form is crucial in determining the possibilities of a transition to the capitalist mode. Marx repeatedly argued that it was the specific process of development of the legal form of 'property' in Europe, from the ancient formation in the Roman period, its breakdown and the evolution of feudal property, which was a crucial element in facilitating the subsequent separation of the labourer from the means of labour in the period of the transition to capitalism. A quite different configuration in the relation between producers, the 'village community' and the state, and thus a different notion of 'property', was to Marx the main condition which impeded the possibility of a separation of the labourer from the means of labour in the Asiatic mode. Once again, the question of how far Marx was accurate in his historical description of Asiatic countries is another matter, but the thrust of his analysis clearly highlights the point that the political form of the class struggle in a period of transition is a struggle over the redefinition

of rights over the means of production. The political instance must therefore be explicitly and concretely conceptualised if we are to relate the historical process of change in social formations to our central concept of the mode of production.

The community and the state are the two main structures we must analyse. It is quite clear that there are diverse forms of 'community', which we have so far only described empirically. What is needed is a theoretical conceptualisation. It is surprising that despite their considerable critical efforts, the reviewers in *Social Scientist* have not discovered the main weakness of a concept such as the 'communal mode of power' as defined in my article in *Subaltern Studies II*. The weakness is that it remains an abstract concept, in the same way as the notion of the 'community' remains abstract in Marx's own writings. We can only describe some of the specific form in which the community seems to make its appearance in certain social formations. We cannot yet understand them as particular forms of a universal concept. This is a problem to which we must address ourselves explicitly. The reviewers have commended me for my brief description of the political aspect of the social relations of production in feudal Europe. The reason why this description seems more lucid than descriptions of other social formations is because the historians of medieval Europe have been able to arrange this historical material in a much more systematic form than historians of other countries or periods. But this is still at the empirical level. I do not think the problem of conceptualising the 'community' in the feudal mode of production has been thereby resolved.

The problem can only be approached by a much more detailed examination of the forms of transition in historical social formations. (I have begun one such examination for the case of the late colonial period in India in *Bengal 1920-1947: The Land Question*, Calcutta, 1984). But it will not help if we continue to suffer from an undue suspicion about the term 'community'. After all, it was Marx himself who reminded his Russian correspondents in 1881 not to be afraid of the word 'archaic', for the crisis of 'modern society' would have to end in 'a return of modern societies to an archaic type of communal property', only in a superior form. Yes, I do think that a framework for the construction of a political theory of the kind I have indicated can be provided in terms of the opposition between community and capital. This can be a fundamentally Marxist project and I am convinced that this was the principal direction of Marx's own researches in his last years. Obviously, no Marxist will claim that the history of transitions can be understood, as the reviewers describe my project, in terms of 'the evolution of the political process alone'. The problem is how to conceptualise the political process *at all*. I can assure the reviewers that there is no trace in this project either of 'a Nietzschean concept of political power isolated from the economic domain' or of 'a profoundly Hegelian view of the totality which includes two paradigmatically opposed forces' (whatever that might mean!).

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OBITUARY

Sharacchandra Muktibodh

SHARACCHANDRA MUKTIBODH (brother of Gajanan Muktibodh) died on 2/ November 1984. The event passed almost unnoticed. This neglect of an important Marathi writer on the part of the Press can, however, be readily explained if we bear in mind that all events and things were overshadowed by the great national calamity that had overtaken us three days earlier and the holocaust that followed. But this was not the first time that Muktibodh was neglected. This had happened all through his career as a writer. The explanation lies partly in the literary atmosphere in Maharashtra during the last thirty/forty years, and partly in what Muktibodh was doing during this period.

We shall first have a look at the literary-intellectual milieu in the post-independence Maharashtra. Pessimism and nihilism dominated the literary scene. There is something paradoxical about this. Why should this negative attitude to life flourish at a time when the nation was awakening, after a long sleep of colonial rule, to the new tasks of national reconstruction, when the value-structure created during the anti-imperialist movement dominated mainly by Gandhi was still alive, when the national development plans were evolved and had started yielding positive results? This is evidence enough to show that at least in Maharashtra the literary elite had lost contact with the mainstream of national life. It appears to have been swept off its feet by Mardhekar, a writer who dominated the literary scene for more than two decades in various ways.

It may be conceded that the pessimism which informed Mardhekar's poetry was authentic, and that the new imagery, diction, syntactical devices he used so powerfully were genuinely warranted by the peculiar content of his poetry. The question that should concern a serious literary critic is how did the personal vision of one poet, however powerful he might be, come to be universalized with such ease and speed? How did it happen that a whole generation of poets began to write in the Mardhekarian idiom? The only plausible explanation is that such things constantly happen in colonised countries. Mardhekar was imitated so universally and uncritically primarily because he brought to Marathi a fresh consignment of what was latest in the West. A country that had attained freedom after a century and a half of all-round slavery cannot help lapsing into cultural parasitism, it is predisposed to import on a large scale Western ideas, attitudes, and forms, whether they

are really required or not, for solving *its* own problems.

The second salient feature of the period we are considering is the inexplicably great importance that came to be attached to Idealist autonomist theory of art as presented by Mardhekar. Mardhekarian aesthetics is a particularly weak branch of the mighty Kantian-Hegelian tree, decked out in flashy finery indiscriminately borrowed from sources as different from each other as Russell and Taylor/F H Bradley, with no consideration for relevance or accuracy. After the appearance of this vacuous theory, aesthetic kite-flying became a popular game and very few writers and critics could resist the temptation to join it, it is unfortunate that Muktibodh took this game seriously enough to undertake a detailed refutation of Mardhekar. This does not mean that people became autonomists on the plane of practical criticism. Many remained non-autonomists, a few were seriously concerned with moral and social problems, a large number continued to provide light entertainment through superficial biographical or autobiographical tit-bits and literary gossip.

The third important feature of the period is the emergence of the 'short story' as the most popular form of literature. This was partly on account of the demands of the new publication medium which was fast gaining popularity—the Diwali number of magazines. Although the number of literary magazines was always small, and they were ever living a precarious existence, there used to be, and still is, a spate of Diwali numbers of magazines of all sorts, a harried reader torn as he is between arrears of office work on the one hand and crackers and *laddus* on the other, finds most suitable cultural fare in a Diwali number, richly studded with about a dozen short stories by star writers. This ideally suits the short story writers, for almost identical reasons. It is not unlikely that writers who were after quick popularity and/or quick money did not have, and did not feel, the need for imaginative and intellectual stamina for sustained work in any direction. Short story as a form can of course be used for a continued and serious quest for values. But only a few short story writers showed a sustained concern for moral, psychological, social or metaphysical problems. An important short story writer of the period very complacently and somewhat proudly told me once that there was little self-consistency in the moral judgements strewn in his stories.

Anyone who is acquainted with the writings of Muktibodh, a serious committed writer preoccupied with some of the major problems of life, can easily see why he must have been neglected by his contemporaries. He was, frankly, somewhat aggressively non-autonomist with pronounced Marxist leanings. Muktibodh's work in three different fields—novel, poetry, criticism—was one integrated attempt at discovering and/or asserting a viable cognitive-cum-valuational structure. In his elaborate discussion of D G Godse's work, *Pot* (Texture), Muktibodh, while paying a handsome compliment to the author for his efforts to provide a social context to art, attributes the shortcomings of the book primarily to Godse's non-Marxist sociological treatment of the subject. Though acutely aware of the almost overwhelming difficulties of modern life, Muktibodh refused to take the defeatist, nihilistic

stance, which was so popular in the period under consideration. Finally, he did not make use of the popular form of short story

Muktibodh's variety of optimism, his affirmation of the ultimate triumph of man, is not based on ignorance of the seamy side of life or on unrealistically exaggerated ideas about human potentialities for self-improvement. We see in his novel *Jan He Volutu Jethe* (Where the Masses Meet) how clear and cautious he is in his ideas about the present and future struggles of man. Bhagwat, an important character that is introduced at a very critical stage in the novel, is a veteran trade unionist, but he does not regard the socialist revolution as the ultimate and adequate remedy for all human ills. After the fight for the material welfare of the toiling masses is won, the struggle for their spiritual well-being will begin, and it is here that the philosophy as developed in ancient India will prove to be of great help. Muktibodh's Marxist leanings are not difficult to see in his trilogy—*Kshupra* (it is the name of a river), *Sarahadd* (The Frontier), *Jan He Volatu Jethe* (where the masses meet)—and in the collections of poems, *Navi Malawat* (The new path,) and *Yatrik* (The Pilgrim). But the best evidence can be found in the three critical books, *Kahu Nibandha* (Some Essays), *Jeevan Ani Sahitya* (Life and Literature), *Srushti, Soundarya, Ani Sahitya Mulya* (Nature, Beauty and Literary Value)

But Muktibodh was a Marxist with a difference, and perhaps an orthodox Marxist would have felt uncomfortable in his company. In his *Srushti* he has tried to prove that the distinguishing mark of literature lies neither in *rasa* of the ancient Sanskrit theory nor in form, as Mardhekar has analysed it, but in the expression and assertion of the human essence (*manushata*). It is doubtful whether his analysis of this central concept will be acceptable to the majority of Marxists, though many of them might not reject it outright. According to the *Paris Manuscripts*, the species-essence of man lies in free labour, free creativity. Conscious and freely willed labour distinguishes man from all other species. But in a class society, man is not the master of it, he has to use it merely for subsistence. Man is thus alienated from his species-essence, from the labour-process, from the product of his labour, from Nature, and from other human beings. When the production relations obtaining in a class society are radically transformed by the proletarian revolution man will transcend his all-round self-alienation and win the long-cherished free creativity. Man will begin to create things that are ends in themselves, not merely means. His activities will be autotelic and self-fulfilling. An artist creating a work of art which is valuable in itself can serve as a good paradigm of the non-alienated man. Marx's picture of a free man sketched in *German Ideology* has given due importance to artistic activity. Muktibodh has shown concern for the artist and his struggles with the environment. But the paradigm as art is not at the centre of his vision. Man's struggle, as conceived by him, is a struggle not for achieving free creativity, but for the establishment of certain eternal values which have been evolving over the ages—for example, *matr* and *karuna* which were commonly shared by many ancient Indian systems like Buddhism, Yoga, Advaita etc. Hence the significance of Bhagwat of *Jan He*. Muktibodh's concept of human essence,

at least in its emphasis, is not Marxist. It actually clashes with the orthodox Marxist insistence on the relativity of values. Of course, this does not mean that all Marxists would reject Muktibodh's contribution to the theme of essence. Those who give due importance to the ideational-volitional aspect of human labour might find it at least thought-provoking. The earlier Marxists were more concerned with the analysis of bourgeois society and the strategy for overthrowing it, than with concretely visualizing life in a classless society in detail. When they address themselves to the latter task, they will find the Muktibodhian synthesis of the West and the East, of Lenin and Tukaram, the *Capital* and *Ishavasya Upanishad* helpful.

Muktibodh's trilogy is significant because it gives a comprehensive vision of man's struggle to attain his highest good. It deals at once with the growth of an individual, Vishwas, from childhood to youth, that of a whole generation from the days of the Princely states to modern India on the eve of independence, and that of impetuous, adolescent, dreamy-eyed romanticism to chastened mature idealism. Along with the socialist concern for justice for the toiling poor, there runs a strain of concern for moral values derived from an essentially religious world view. The strife between the positive and negative principles in life is presented with all its complexity. For example, the principle of Good is represented in different ways, concretized in different individuals with their distinct forms of life. Babu with his pious innocence of the ways of the world, Bhava's passive acceptance of all that comes his way, Madhu's individualistic and romantic rebellion against evil, Vishwas's progress from individualistic to collective and integrated action. Evil is also represented in a variety of ways. Again there are here, as there are in real life, characters who are morally and psychologically so baffling that it is impossible to place them neatly in any category. Chief among them is Sadashivrao, the mysterious police officer, who shadows underground revolutionaries and also Vishwas. His conversations with Vishwas are reminiscent of philosophical discussions in Dostoyevsky's novels. The picture of society, particularly that of the lower middle class is concrete with close attention paid to minute particulars. The depiction of Nana's home can be cited as an example. It may be noted in passing that the depiction is occasionally marred by sentimentality and sensationalism.

In his best works we find Muktibodh trying to see life steadily and see it whole, and suddenly he obtains an insight into life. He is at his best when he allows his vision to emerge spontaneously from the concrete details of life. This, of course, does not mean that he is successful when he approaches life with an empty mind, such thing is logically impossible. He does bring with him a conceptual-valuational structure. But it is so complex that no particular intellectual system can completely absorb it. Muktibodh is not merely a chronicler nor is he a scientist or a philosopher. Aristotle has claimed that poetry is more philosophical than history, but he does not claim that poetry is philosophy. Muktibodh's achievements and failure can be properly understood in the light of the above distinction.

But Muktibodh, eminently gifted as he was, does not appear to have

attained self-knowledge. Sometimes he assumes the role of a philosopher-scientist, and the result is usually disappointing. This can be seen most clearly in his poetry and critical writings

When Muktibodh writes poetry with a rigid preconceived theory in mind, he turns out didactic and schematic poems. He then resorts to ready-made material to illustrate his theory. That is why in his doctrinaire poems usually written to convey some 'revolutionary' message there is excessive use of stock ideas like 'blood', 'fire', 'sweat', 'storm', 'sea', 'night', 'darkness', 'light', 'dawn'. They do not possess the evocative power that fresh images and ideas have. Muktibodh is at his best in his delicate and sensitive love poetry and nature poetry and not in his 'revolutionary' poetry.

That Muktibodh was uncomfortable on the plane of abstract theory should be evident to any knowledgeable reader of his *Srushti*. . . , consider, for example, the way he has used D'Arcy Thomson's *On Growth and Form* to prove the inadequacy of Mardhekar's formalistic aesthetic theory stated in terms of three laws of rhythm. Mardhekar is supposed to have analysed beauty into the three laws of harmony, contrast, and balance. To say that something is beautiful is to say that it is structured according to the above laws. The content by itself and its structuring according to cognitive and practical principles are irrelevant in the aesthetic context. It is amazing that such a simplistic interpretation of the concept of form was so readily accepted by Mardhekar's contemporaries. Like many others, Muktibodh was taken in by the Mardhekarian abracadabra. He involved laws of thermodynamics to show that it is the natural tendency of energy to assume forms which are symmetrical in structure. Symmetrical structure is thus seen to be present in all organisations and not something peculiar to aesthetic objects. It can therefore at best be regarded as a necessary, but not a sufficient condition of aesthetic objects. It is a little amusing and sad to see Muktibodh trying to refute Mardhekar's simplified version of the concept of form. Surely 'form' has many senses, and the argument that might demolish Mardhekar's theory might have no application in other contexts. For example, laws of thermodynamics do not help a literary critic in understanding the structure of *King Lear* or *Lord Jim* or *Dnyaneshwar*. Had Muktibodh been acquainted with the discipline of philosophy proper he would not have spent so much time on the discussion of Mardhekar's aesthetics.

Muktibodh shows other lapses in his *Srushti*, from which most of his earlier critical writing appears to be free. Sometimes he seems to have lost control over the art of composition. Why should such a thing have happened? The explanation that Leavis gives for the defects which Blake's later poetry developed might help us here. Like Blake, Muktibodh was losing rapport with his audience. He was getting progressively isolated as years passed.

When short story was the popular medium, Muktibodh wrote a trilogy, a form no one else used in his generation. Although most of his contemporaries swore by formalism, nobody appears to have made a serious

attempt at structural analysis of short stories. There was hardly any serious theoretical or practical criticism written in those days. It is therefore not surprising that no critic attempted a formalistic analysis of Muktabodh's trilogy. We saw earlier that although formalism was the most popular, theoretical position, critics of his generation sometimes did write about the content of literary works. But in the period when serious literary criticism was replaced by entertainment with literary works as an excuse, who was going to undertake a serious systematic analysis of the type of spiritual fare that Muktabodh offered? He was a Marxist, but perhaps not 'rigorous' enough to be wholly acceptable to the left. He disliked middle class values, and therefore must have deliberately severed connections with the middle class intellectuals. He could have established rapport with the Dalit writers, but perhaps discovered that most of them were too pre-occupied with the rights of one community to have wider sympathies. I did not know Muktabodh well as a person. But it is likely that he was too sensitive, earnest and austere to suit the taste of Marathi intellectuals and seminarists. It is possible that he inspired awe, was respected, but was always kept at a distance. He won the Sahitya Akademi award but not more than a couple of serious articles were written on his works till very recently, when perhaps he was losing interest in any critical response. When one reviews his literary career one is reminded of the hero of a contemporary play *Udhvasta Dharmashala*, a man of uncompromising principles, but not wholly acceptable anywhere.

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BOOK REVIEW

Labour Surplus Economy : A Neo-Keynesian Analysis

MIHIR RAKSHIT, *THE LABOUR SURPLUS ECONOMY A NEO-KEYNESIAN APPROACH*, New Delhi, Macmillan, pp ix+295

THERE ARE ISOLATED applications of the Keynesian effective demand principle in the Indian context both in academic work and in official exercises for rationalizing policy decisions. But a persistent general reluctance can be discerned towards applying the Keynesian method for modelling the economy in the entirety of its inter-relations between different aggregate markets. The underlying hesitation is perhaps due to the perception of wide dissimilarity between the institutional description of our economy and that of the *General Theory*. This hesitation is slowly giving way, mostly as an outcome of the theoretical research in the 1970's following what is known as the crisis of Keynesianism, which has resulted in a pronounced widening of the scope of Keynesian macro-economics, by extending its use over a larger number of economic situations. The effective demand principle, for example, has ceased to be a synonym for macro-economics, and economists can now analyse, with allegedly equal ease, situations where unemployment persists despite an excess demand in the goods market. In the process, many of the specifications of the *General Theory* which appeared to be inseparable elements of the argument itself, have been demonstrated as but embodying Keynes's own perception of the empirical reality around him and thus easily substitutable by other specifications. Mihir Rakshit has taken the initiative in introducing this broader awareness of short-run aggregate analysis by most painstakingly and meticulously analysing the Indian economy in his book under review.

An innovation that characterizes his work throughout is to replace the dichotomy between consumption and investment goods by that between agricultural and industrial goods. This innovation, too, in an interesting sense, is Keynesian, since it is based primarily on the difference between the output behavior of the two sectors, one of which is assumed to have a given output, while the other's output changes in response to demand. We may recall that unlike in Marx's two-department scheme where the consumption and investment dichotomy has crucial analytical implications, Keynes's use of the distinction in the context of a single short run primarily utilizes the fact of the difference in the supply elasticities. Investment decisions being based in the *General Theory* on matters invariant in the income-propagation period, the output of investment goods remains constant during this period and

allows Keynes to focus on the output adjustment of consumption goods alone. This, after all, is the source of a fixed 'multiplicand' in the Keynesian single period which delivers him his famous multiplier, and enables him to dismiss as unimportant the induced investment decision during his short period—the major preoccupation of the Swedish economists of his time.

The book presents two basic models. The first one presented earlier in the book tries to model the interaction between an agricultural and a non-agricultural sector neither of which has been penetrated by capitalism. The author uses this model to analyse some problems relating to India's economic past, presumably before the rise of organized industry. Even though this part examines a number of important issues relating to our economic history, we will, for want of space, focus on his second group of ideas that give us his second model analysing our contemporary economy.

The Model

The important features of the ambience in which the model has been set up are the following. The agricultural sector's output net of its own consumption is given in the short run as a first approximation, while its marketed supply depends on the terms at which it can sell its products to buy industrial goods. An increasing part of agricultural output is held as inventory investment in the agricultural sector as the terms become more and more unfavourable for agriculture. The equilibrium terms of trade between agriculture and industry is established by the market clearance condition for the agricultural goods.

In the industrial sector real wages in terms of agricultural goods are fixed. Industry has a supply schedule which tends to equate the marginal product of labour with its wage in product terms. There is no price adjustment mechanism in the short run to establish demand-supply equality for industrial production. Of *ex-ante* demand and supply, whichever is less then becomes the quantity actually produced and traded. The demand for this sector comes partly from the agricultural sector, represented by the latter's marketed output and partly from investment and consumption demand of industrial capitalists.

The influence of money, credit and the government has been studied later as a closer approximation to reality. We may first examine the skeletal story without these complications. The set-up just described suggests that in the short period, industrial output may be limited by any one of three factors. First of all, the wage bill in industry cannot exceed what is marketed by the agricultural sector. Given the real wage in terms of agricultural goods, it implies that a definite amount of employment and production in industry is associated with each terms of trade. The worse the terms for agriculture, the more of its output is held as inventory and the less is sold to the industrial sector, thus reducing its potential of employment and output. Since the industrial wage is fixed in terms of agricultural goods, at each terms of trade there is a maximum output beyond which industry would not expand its production.

It would appear from the above that an equilibrium terms of trade can be found at which industry is on its supply curve and is buying the necessary amount of agricultural goods for its wage bill. However, that equilibrium has a difficulty and that brings us to the third constraint on industrial output. At this stated equilibrium, industry is selling to agriculture only a part of its output that represents the wage bill. There is no guarantee that the other part of industrial output representing profits will be sold. Given that the market for industrial goods does not clear through price adjustment, two possible situations are now indicated (except for the event of an accidental equality between supply and demand). One is where industry selling at its supply price fetches the required amount of wage goods, and also finds that at these terms of trade there is more than enough demand for its output. The industrial output in such a case is then supply-constrained and a part of the industrial demand goes unattended.

The second possibility is when industry finds that if it were to produce at its supply price and get enough wage goods from the agricultural sector, it could not sell its total output because of a lack of demand. The industry in this case produces less, thus needing less wage goods and therefore establishes a better terms of trade for itself than if it was on the supply curve. Agricultural sector at these terms of trade is absorbing that part of industrial output which cannot be sold to the industrial capitalists on consumption and investment accounts. We have here what can be called a demand constrained situation—the terms of trade that have been established can bring forth a larger industrial output, but it does not materialize for lack of demand.

This analysis of the two commodity markets is in some sense a preliminary sketch, to be filled in later by the influences of money, credit and the government. However, the author uses a technique by which he manages to project these influences ultimately on the supply-demand configurations in the two commodity markets. The ultimate outcome can thus be studied by referring to the same types of situations as above, after projecting the impact of money, credit and government activity on them.

Money, Credit and the Government

In integrating the functioning of the commodity markets with the influence of money, credit and government activities, Rakshit introduces a useful simplification by noting that in our economy money and credit have their own special spheres of use and a lot of complications that arise from consideration of their substitutability is purely doctrinaire in the Indian context and is better avoided. The demand for money, used mainly for transactions, is influenced by the nominal output levels in the two sectors, while the demand for credit is mostly for production and investment in the industrial sector and for inventory financing in agriculture. Since interest rates are not market clearing, it is the quantity of credit available that influences the inventory decision in agriculture and production and investment decision in industry. Thus the volume of credit and its distribution between agriculture and industry will ultimately affect the positions of the three constraints on

industrial production that we outlined above. The effect of the credit situation thus maps itself on the happenings in the commodity markets.

The relation between money and credit, however, is important on the supply side. Given the supply of outside money, the banks' cash reserves are residually derived from the transactions demand for cash of the public, and the cash reserves ultimately determine the total volume of credit that banks can supply. If the banks are fully loaned up (as they are in Rakshit's analysis), and if the volume of credit going to the government and the agricultural sector is given, the supply of credit to industry can be worked out.

Finally arises the question of the supply of outside money. Assuming that the government has an exogenously given real expenditure plan, and that tax receipts are functionally related to nominal output levels, the uncovered deficit (net of given commercial bank borrowings by the government) yields the increment to outside money in the system.

When all these elements are put together, the situation, avoiding some niceties, can be viewed as follows. There are two givens in the short run—the level of agricultural output and the real expenditure plan of the government (together with a part of real investment plan of industry, if we want). Given the volume of loans available to the agricultural sector, the schedule of marketed supply from agricultural sector at different terms of trade becomes fixed. The supply price behaviour of industry, however, is not yet fixed—it depends on the loans to the industrial sector, which, in turn, would depend on money supply. Money supply, in turn, is not autonomous but depends on the government deficit determined by the price of industrial goods (on which it spends) and the nominal output level (which determines tax receipts and transaction demands). Thus at each possible terms of trade along the agriculture's supply curve, there is a possible volume of credit supply to industry and thus an entire supply curve of industry. Similarly for the effective demand curve.

A supply-constrained and a demand-constrained equilibrium now has the same features as earlier except that the supply behaviours are modified by the credit situation consistent with the equilibrium situation. Also the effective demand now contains the government's demand as well.

Some Comments

Rakshit's book, a major addition to our literature on the formal analysis of the Indian economy, is going to influence research work in the related areas. It appears important, in view of this, to take stock of some of its building elements more carefully.

The first thing that strikes one about the analysis is the assumption of a fixed real wage rate maintained throughout the book. The movements in the agricultural and the industrial prices thus affect either the industrialists or the landlords, but not the wage-earning people. The author justifies this at one point by suggesting that the real wage rate for unskilled labour in the industrial sector has remained virtually stagnant over long periods. However, in

the short-run analysis that this book is concerned with, the question is whether price and real wage changes are an aspect of the short run adjustment in the economy following a crop harvest and a government's expenditure plan. The real wage fall (if any) may be neutralized later by a subsequent rise in money wage rate in the next period, which may again witness a similar process. The statistical outcome of such a process will be a near constancy of the real wages, while it will remain true that the real wage adjustment is an important aspect of the short run process. The point is worth making in view of the fluctuations in real wages usually reported.¹ To underline the possible importance of real wage adjustment in the industrial sector, we may reconsider the situation of supply constraint in Rakshit's analysis. The situation here is that industry, to get its wage requirements of agricultural goods, has to sell its output to the agricultural sector at highly unfavourable terms for itself. As a result, the demand from the agricultural sector is very high, but the price that industry gets does not justify meeting the entire demand in the market (part of which is coming from agriculture). Since the terms of trade are established by the condition of market clearance for agricultural goods, that cannot be tampered with to increase industrial employment, and the supply constrained situation persists. If however the real wage was flexible, it is conceivable that employment can be expanded at the cost of real wage rate. A fall in the real wage rate will shift the supply curve of industry to the right and also at the same time, at each terms of trade, a higher level of employment in industry can be sustained since per capita wage goods requirement has fallen. It seems to be not only possible, but a probable outcome in a situation where industry fails to expand in spite of excess demand because of high agricultural prices, to shift a part of the burden of the latter on to industrial workers.

In this connection we are led to a second group of difficulties, and this is about the concept of a supply constraint in our economy. The idea of a supply constraint, as mooted by many economists basing themselves on the recent experience of the West European economies,² derives from the perception that the real wage rate may be too high at times. Since wages are largely spent, it increases the effective demand to a point where production is not profitable at such a high wage. Rakshit uses the ideas of the supply constraint in an interesting manner. It arises when the terms of trade are too favourable for agriculture, so that agriculture's demand for industry is very high—so high that it cannot be profitably produced at the unfavourable terms for industry. An underlying assumption common to both the usual formulation of a supply constraint and Rakshit's is, of course, the variable proportions generating a rising supply curve. While a supply constraint arising at unfavourable terms for industry due to diminishing returns to variable factors is a logically possible situation, one considers whether the supply constraint in our economy really lies here. The industrial sector has been producing with large unutilized capacity most of the time, and it is possible to argue that it could meet higher demand at constant (if not declining) average cost. A supply constraint in such a situation can be identified as arising not so

much from the fixity of plants at the production units but from the unavailability of infrastructural services, mostly electricity and transport. Since these infrastructural services are available at fixed prices as long as they are available, they do not contribute to a rise in the average cost of production, but simply make production impossible beyond a level. The difference between this situation and the rising supply curve used by Rakshit can be made to look trivial by suggesting that the former would give rise to a vertical stretch in the supply curve at the point where infrastructure becomes inadequate and that such a curve is but a special and extreme case of a rising supply curve. But it appears that the distinction is more substantive. If the real wages in industry were flexible (in the way we discussed it above), then in a supply constrained situation a reduction of real wages in the industrial sector would increase employment if the rising supply curve is due to the working of variable proportions alone. If however the supply constraint is arising from infrastructural bottlenecks, and the industrial sector is somewhere on the vertical stretch of the supply curve, a fall in the real wage rate will fail to promote employment. The question here is not merely of policy, i.e., whether employment can be expanded by a reduction in the real wage rate. It is possible indeed to expect that in a supply constrained situation there would be a distinct inflationary pressure to reduce the real wage rate, but this, failing to expand output and employment, will result in a stagflationary situation with excess capacity at the individual plant level.

This observation brings us to an important point, namely, that the flow analysis of a Keynesian variety, by construction more equipped to diagnose and analyse *flow* maladjustments in the economy, is not well equipped to treat situations of *structural* maladjustment. If the supply constraints of our economy are structural in nature, arising out of a disproportion between industrial capacity and the availability of infrastructural services, rather than of a short run maladjustment between the flow magnitudes, or at any rate, if the former is more important and pressing, the prescriptions coming from Keynesian flow analysis will prove misleading. We should conclude this section by pointing out that a similar remark can also be made about the demand side of the problem.

Money and Credit

In Rakshit's book, "money matters". An increased supply of money at unchanged nominal output levels (if it was possible, that is) would increase the banks' reserves, augmenting the availability of credit. The volume of credit now works through investment and production schedules to ultimately affect the equilibrium terms of trade and the sectoral outputs. As a general proposition of the influence of an increased money supply, this certainly is more convincing than expecting it to affect spending and prices, directly, or investment, output and employment via interest rate changes (which at any rate are not market clearing in our economy). Thus, the supply of money affects the volume, rather than the price of credit and the rest of the story follows. However, a few questions of detail may be inserted at this point. For the industrial sector the availability of credit in Rakshit's model affects its

investment and production decisions, which will ultimately be felt on the equilibrium output and prices too.

We wonder if it may not also be suggested that credit availability may directly affect industrial pricing decisions. It would, of course, require the analysis to be recast in terms of oligopolistic structures in the industrial sector, but that might be worthwhile, too. It is possible to argue that in times of more plentiful bank credit, the oligopolistic mark-ups have a tendency to revise themselves upwards. The micro-economics of this is not too difficult to construct, but for this purpose it would be necessary in our view to incorporate into the analysis situations where the banks are not fully loaned up and the 'excess liquidity' in the system. Rakshit analyses only situations of credit rationing, but we also have had periods when the banks have lent less than their potential for sustained periods. It appears that during such periods the assurance of loans (which need not be indeed taken) allows oligopolists to raise their prices (which perhaps was being contemplated for quite some time). The excess liquidity may thus be taken as directly inducing oligopolistic price increases, and then as the prices actually rise and transactions demand cash increase, the excess liquidity of the banks may slowly disappear. But the prices have, meanwhile, stabilized at a higher level.

A similar point can be made about agricultural prices too, namely, their tendency to rise in times of excess liquidity, and this, due to speculation. Rakshit has deliberately kept his model clear of speculation in agriculture, as well as oligopoly in the industrial sector. Both can be fruitfully introduced by future researchers not just to capture an element of descriptive realism, but what is more important, because oligopoly in industries and speculative holdings in agricultural goods seem to be two important purveyors through which the credit situation influences the commodity markets.

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- 1 See, for example, P Venkataramaiah, "Is Organised Labour Exploiting or Exploited?" *Artha Vijnana*, Vol. XX, No. 2, June 1978, pp 135-142
- 2 For example, Malinvaud refers to the new situation created by high real wages in the West European countries. E Malinvaud, *The Theory of Unemployment Reconsidered*, Basil Blackwell, 1977

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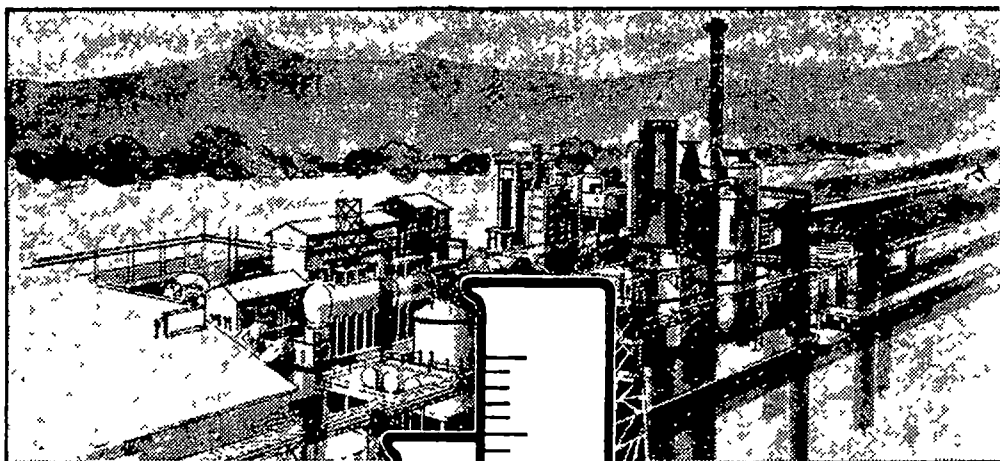
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Editorial Note

READERS may have noticed that *Social Scientist* issues are increasingly falling into two distinct categories. Some are specific theme-oriented issues in the sense that each such issue is organised around a particular theme and contains articles more or less exclusively concerned with this theme, others however are agglomerations of articles and notes dealing with diverse themes. A journal like ours cannot, and perhaps should not, attempt to become exclusively theme-oriented, a mix of both types of issues is what we shall continue to strive for. Within this "mix", however, our current plans are to have approximately six issues, i.e. half of the total number of issues, in a year devoted to discussions of specific themes. With this object in view we are planning to bring out in the near future the following five issues, each dealing with a specific theme on the Chinese economy, on the significance of the current changes in India's economic policy, on the agrarian question in India, on issues concerning women and on micro-studies of the impact of colonialism in particular regions. "Portmanteau" issues however will be interspersed between these five theme-oriented issues as well as on either side of them.

The current issue of *Social Scientist* is decidedly a "Portmanteau" issue with articles dealing with diverse themes. We publish as the lead article of the current number the presidential address by Professor B. D. Chattopadhyaya delivered some time ago to the Ancient India section of the Indian History Congress, in which the author develops a framework for the study of early Medieval Indian polity. He is critical of the "segmentary state" approach to early medieval polity, currently fashionable among a number of Western Indologists which sees "ritual sovereignty" rather than "political sovereignty" as the major integrative factor in the state-structure; he is also critical of attempts to trace the genesis of early medieval polity characterised by the *samanta* feudatory system, to the creation *from above* of basis of power through the system of land-grants. Rather he sees the early medieval polity as essentially an "integrative polity" thrown up by the exigencies of the greater penetration of state society into local agrarian and peripheral levels. It thus constitutes in his view an intermediate stage between the territorially limited state society of the early historical period and the state society of the medieval period characterised by the exercise

of greater control by the state.

While debates on the medieval and modern Indian state and society have generally reached out to a wider audience outside of the small circle of academic researchers involved in the debates, the same unfortunately cannot be said with regard to the ancient or early medieval periods. We are glad therefore to be able to bring to our readers through this article a flavour of the discussions taking place on these vital questions among researchers of this period of Indian history

The article by Prakash Chandra traces the development of the national movement in Kashmir, highlighting the manner in which the tradition of secular nationalism gathered strength in that state, keeping at bay Muslim communalism and the appeal of the Pakistan movement. The strength of this secular tradition was demonstrated by the fact that even during the darkest days of the communal holocaust in the rest of India following Partition, Hindu-Muslim relations in Kashmir remained peaceful. It is the attempt of the ruling party at the Centre under pressure from Hindu communalism emanating from the "North Indian Hindu mainland" to ride rough-shod over the regional-cultural aspirations of the Kashmiri community, that led to the emergence of separatist and anti-Indian sentiments among the people in the state and thus reversed the gains of the freedom struggle. The moral of the story according to the author therefore is that the arbitrary imposition of an aggressive pan-Indian nationalism creates the conditions, as it did in Kashmir and has done elsewhere subsequently, under which regional nationalism gets transformed into secessionism and communalism, a necessary condition for the unity of this diverse country is an adequate cognition of, and respect for, the two levels at which national consciousness exists among the people. -

The period of the seventies was marked by a spate of struggles by the common people to defend themselves against the burdens which intensifying crisis was imposing upon them, struggles against price-rise, for wage-increases for defence of civil liberties which were increasingly coming under threat burst forth all over the country. Women not only played a vital part in these struggles but also came forward in large numbers against sexual harassment social oppression and police atrocities. The role played by women in a variety of struggles in the period 1970-77 is documented in the article by Meera Velayudhan, which once again points to the tremendous reservoir of militancy that exists in this hitherto neglected sector of society

*Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early
Medieval India : Problems of Perspective*

THE PROBLEM I refer to concerns the study of polity in early medieval India. There is hardly any need to underline that this erstwhile 'dark period' of Indian history (a characterization deriving incidentally from the 'absence' of vast territorial empires in the period) is fast emerging as one in which significant changes were taking place¹—a useful reminder that historical assessments never remain static and need to go through a process of constant re-evaluation. As one interested in the study of early medieval India, my feeling has been that the problem of the political formation of this period is in an urgent need of re-evaluation, and while it will be presumptuous to think in terms of a single empirical work which will cover the problem at the level of the entire subcontinent, one can at least pose the problem, constant reminders regarding regional variations notwithstanding, at the subcontinental level from the perspective of the possible processes in operation. My own interest in the study of early medieval polity derives not so much from the recent spate of publications on early state and the possibility of analyzing early Indian political systems in the light of new ideas² but from more pragmatic considerations. The foremost among these is the resurrection, through the study of polity, of an interest in the study of the political history of the period. I apprehend that this sentiment is likely to raise a murmur of protest and I am also likely to be reminded that we have had enough of political history which may be sanctioned well-earned rest for some time to come. I wonder if this is really so, since I would like to think that historical re-evaluation of the nature of change in a period implies re-evaluation of its sources in their entirety. As a teacher of ancient Indian history I notice a growing trend among students to whom "social and economic history" is what really matters since political history with its endless dates, genealogical charts and catalogues of battles involves senseless cramming and serves no intellectual purpose at all³. Given the nature of ancient Indian political historiography⁴, the distaste is understandable, but if in sheer frustration we turn away from a serious study of political history, we shall, perhaps unwittingly, be subscribing to the equally dangerous lapse of compart-

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mentalized history. After all, the study of polity essentially involves analysis of the nature, organization and distribution of power, and in state society in which the contours of inequality are sharp, relations of power encompass relations at other levels in some form or the other⁵ Even the seemingly bewildering variety of details of the political history of early medieval India—the absurdly long genealogies, the inflated records of achievements of microscopic kingdoms, the rapidity of the rise and fall of centres of power—are ultimately manifestations of the way polity evolved in the period and hence worthy, not so much of cataloguing, but of serious analysis. I may make an additional point in justification of my plea for the study of political history by saying that an occasional comparison of notes with the historiography of medieval India would help, because medieval historians, instead of increasingly building up a prejudice against political history, have in fact continued to enrich its historiography and have made it an essential part of our understanding of that period⁶

I

The relevant approaches to the study of early medieval polity will be taken up for further discussion later, let me start with a brief reference to the basic opposition between two broad strands of assumptions that bear upon the study of Indian polity. In one assumption, polity in pre-modern India is variously characterized as 'traditional'⁷ or 'Oriental Despotic'⁸, in fact, it has been considered possible by different individual authors—all apparently subscribing to the assumption of 'traditional polity'—to view political ideas and structures of disparate periods of Indian history in terms of a model of pre-State polity⁹. It would of course be too simplistic to lump a wide variety of writings on traditional pre-modern polity together because both in their empirical and theoretical contents such contributions vary substantially, but basically the broad assumption underlying most of them remains that traditional polity was essentially changeless: 'a continual kalaeidoscopic reorientation of a given political and social content'¹⁰. Opposed to this view of "traditional" polity within which what we call 'early medieval' does not stand clearly demarcated is the other which envisages possibilities of change and, curiously, it is within this view that most empirical studies on early medieval India can be located. Here too views on change or on mechanisms of change are not identical, the majority of works on early medieval political history and institutions in fact contain generalizations which are mutually contradictory. The king in all the monarchical states is the source of absolute power and wields control through bureaucracy, there is thus nothing much to distinguish him from the 'absolute despot' despite his benevolent disposition; and yet, the malaise of polity is generated by tendencies of feudalism¹¹. Change, expressed mostly in terms of dynastic shifts, becomes, in the early medieval context, a concern over the size of the emperor's territory; imperial rulers down to the time of Harsa endeavour to

stem the tide of disintegration and fragmentation, which is seen as a disastrous change from the ideal imperial pattern and which is invariably assessed against the ultimate failure to retain what used to be called—and I fear many of our much used text books continue to call—the Hindu political order.¹² Concern with failure of the early medieval political order—a concern not only noticeable in works on political history¹³ but a starting point in serious monographs on social and economic history¹⁴ as well—has logically led to value-judgements on the structure of polity, a single quote from a widely-read text book on polity, out of many such available, will serve to illustrate the sentiment common to most historians of early medieval India ‘(the) ideal of federal-feudal empire, with full liberty to each constituent state to strive for the imperial status but without permission to forge a unitary empire after the conquest thus produced a state of continuous instability in ancient India’¹⁵. I have chosen this quote to underline the kind of ambivalence which permeates the writings even of those who tend to think in terms of change: there is dichotomy between ‘constituent state’ and ‘unitary empire’, the dichotomy deriving in the present case from adherence to the model provided by ancient political thinkers, the dichotomy is not timeless because its emergence is located in the fourth century A.D. and yet it ‘produced a state of continuous instability in ancient India’, instability being change from the norm i.e., the centralized State.

Whatever be the merit of the terminologies used in these writings, historiographically the interesting correlation is between change in polity and feudalism ‘Feudalism’ is thus not a new historiographical convention; its use, limited to the political plane, has been as a synonym for political fragmentation and the term has in fact been shuttled back and forth in Indian history to suit any period in which no ‘unitary empire’ could be located on the political horizon.¹⁶

We all know that a major breakthrough in the application of this term to the Indian context came in the form of a new genre of empirical works from the fifties,¹⁷ here for the first time ‘feudal polity’ is not an entity-in-itself, through a reasoned argument—irrespective of whether we accept the argument or not—‘feudal polity’ is shown to be a stage which represents a structural change in the Indian social and economic order, it envisages the emergence of a hierarchical structure of society in place of the binarily opposed entities of the State and the peasantry, and it is basically this hierarchical structure with its different tiers of intermediaries which explains the mechanism of exploitation and coercion of the early medieval state. The distinctive contribution of ‘Indian feudalism’, from the perspective of the problem I have in view, consists in the attempt to plug in the gap between polity and society.

In concluding this brief review of various stands of opinions on early Indian polity, which tend to be organized into two opposite sets, I feel that the opposition cannot be pushed to any extreme limits. If the feeling represents a curious contradiction, the contradiction is embedded in avail-

able historiography. For even those who work within the framework of traditional polity do not all necessarily work with such a historical models as 'Oriental Despotism'¹⁸; similarly, the current construct of 'feudal polity' carries over elements from past historiography, which in a way hinder the formulation of a long-term perspective of change. The opposition perhaps ultimately lies in the realm of ideologies and perspectives than in the realization of the necessity of study of change. We turn now to the specificity of the problem which this historiographical situation has created for the study of early medieval polity.

II

The structure of the construct of Indian feudalism, which is spoken of as a variant form, rests, so far as the study of polity is concerned, on two interrelated arguments. Since detailed studies of early medieval political formation within the framework of the feudalism hypothesis are still a desideratum,¹⁹ they therefore need to be stated: (i) Feudal polity emerged out of a gradual breakdown of a centralized bureaucratic state system, empirically represented by the Mauryan state, the implication of the argument being that the emergence of diverse centres of power of later periods would correspond to a process of displacement of bureaucratic units. The crystallization of feudal polity, in this argument, however, lies at a distance of eight centuries from the time of the disintegration of the Mauryan state, although elements of feudal polity—suggested by a two-tier or three-tier structure of the administrative system—are identified in the Kusana polity of north India and the Satavahana polity of the Deccan,²⁰ (ii) the system of assignment of land, apparently absent in the Mauryan state because of the practice of remuneration in cash, became widespread and intermixed with transfer of rights of administration, corroding the authority of the state and leading to the 'parcellization' of its sovereignty.^{20a} It may be interesting to dilate on this characterization of the Mauryan state and its choice as a starting point for the study of feudal polity because at one level it carries over from past historiography the equation, feudal polity=political fragmentation=dismemberment of a centralized state; at another, it represents an unstated search for a proto-type of the state system of the Classical West the breakdown of which provides a starting point for the study of western feudalism. However, for our purpose, the validity of the arguments stated above can be subjected to a single test: do they sufficiently explain the total political configuration of what is called the feudal formation? The explanation has to relate not to the structures of individual monarchies alone but also to the political geography of the subcontinent at any given point of time—a requirement suggested by frequent shifts in the centres of power and the ongoing process of the formation of new polities as a result of transition from pre-state to state societies. It is considerations such as these which have led to considerable rethinking regarding the Mauryan state itself²¹, which—the focal point in the concentration area of the earlier *mahajanapadas* of

the upper and middle Ganges basin—represents basically a relationship between the nucleus which is the metropolitan state and a range of differentiated polities. The disappearance of the metropolitan Mauryan state did not create a political or economic crisis either in areas where state polity had been in existence before or in areas of pre-state polity incorporated within the Mauryan empire. In fact, Mauryan territorial expansion and similar expansions at later times seem to have created a fresh spurt in the emergence of local states in areas of pre-state polity—a phenomenon certainly not to be confused with a process of decentralization of a centralized administration.²²

Two further points regarding the current historiography on the genesis of feudal polity need to be made. First, not all criticisms levelled against the use of landgrant evidence for explaining the genesis of feudal polity can be brushed aside lightly. The fact remains that the major bulk of epigraphic evidence relates to *brahmadeyas* and *devadanas*, grants to brahmanas and religious establishments, and the element of contract is largely absent in the system of early and early medieval landgrants. The presence of contractual element cannot be altogether denied,²³ it would also be difficult to disagree with the view that the system of assignments brought in important changes in agrarian relations in areas where such assignments were made²⁴—but how does it all help us to understand the genesis of feudal polity? Let me clarify. The *samanta*-feudatory system has been considered to be the hallmark of the structure of polity in early medieval India²⁵ and there is no reason to dispute the empirical validity of this point—but it has not been seriously examined how even the system of secular or service assignments to officials led to the emergence of *samanta*-feudatory network. It has been conceded that the general chronology of the epigraphic evidence for service-assignments postdates the genesis of feudal polity²⁶. The conclusion which ought to follow from it is that service grants present a facet and not the precondition for the emergence of the overall pattern of political dominance. Secondly, irrespective of whether administrative measures can bring in changes in societal formations or not²⁷, there is the larger question—what generates administrative measures? Land assignments as administrative measures are, we have seen, presented as deliberate acts which corrode the authority of the State, the State not only parts with its sources of revenue but also with its coercive and administrative prerogatives. Thus feudal polity arises because pre-feudal polity decides, to use an all-too-familiar expression, to preside over the liquidation of its own power. This is a curious position to take, which could be understandable only in terms of a crisis of structural significance in pre-feudal political and economic order. We have argued earlier that the breakdown of the Mauryan State does not appear to have generated such a crisis;²⁸ in fact, in a situation in which the state polity was ever expanding horizontally and the final annihilation of the *gana-samgha* system of polity was taking place,²⁹ it would be a difficult exercise indeed to construct a reasoned theory of crisis in State power.

One must then look for an alternative explanation. In presenting the above critique of the historiography of the genesis of early medieval polity, the differential distribution of power represented by the *samanta*-feudatory structure is not disputed; what is questioned is the rather one-track argument, wholly centred around a particular value attached to the evidence of the landgrants; for the emergence of the structure in pre-Gupta and Gupta times. In fact, in no state system, however centralized, there can be a single focus or level of power, and the specificity of the differential distribution of power in early medieval polity may be an issue more complex than it has hitherto been assumed. And perhaps, a re-evaluation of the evidence of the majority of landgrants may be located within this complexity.

III

At one level this complexity derives from the presence of trans-political ideology in all State systems, even though in the context of early medieval India one may not perceive such ideology from the perspective of anthropologists or anthropology-oriented historians. One dimension of this was the need for constant validation of power not only in areas where a community was passing from pre-state to state-society stage but even in established State societies. The root of this need which, in the early medieval context, may be understood by broadly labelling it as the 'legitimation' process, lay in the separation between the temporal and the sacred domain³⁰. The domains, if one goes beyond theory and tries to grasp their relationship in concrete existential terms, must be seen as interdependent, if temporal power needed 'legitimation' from 'spiritual' authority, so did the human agents of 'spiritual' authority require sustenance from temporal power. Viewed from this perspective, it should not be surprising that priestly validation of temporal power continued beyond the period of 'Hindu' dynasties, the brahmana, in situation of reciprocal relationship, could continue to prepare *prasastis* of the rule of a Sultan and Sanskritize his title to *Suratrana*.³¹ Emphasis on legitimation alone obfuscates crucial aspects of the exercise of force and of the secular compulsions of State power, but as a part of overall political process it nevertheless offers us a convenient vantage point from which to view the ideological dimension of the State. Temporal power, in early as well as later theoretical writings, was required to guarantee protection, it would be too narrow a view of 'protection' to take it simply to mean physical protection of subjects. Protection related to the ideal social order as defined by the guardians of the sacred domain *Danda* or force which may have had both secular and non-secular connotations was intended by the guardians of sacred domain primarily not as a political expedient but for the preservation of the social order.³² Curiously, the ideal social order was defined, but *dharma*, nevertheless, was not uniform, and although the King was required to preserve social order, he was at the same time enjoined to allow the disparate *dharmas* of regions, guilds and asso-

ciations and of social groups to continue.³³ If there is an anomaly here, the anomaly may help us to understand the massive support which the ruling elites extended to the representatives of the sacred domain in the early medieval period. The territorial spread of the State society required cutting through the tangle of disparate *dharma*s through the territorial spread of the brahmanas and of institutions representing uniform norm in some form or the other, they did not necessarily eliminate the disparate norms but they could provide a central focus to such disparate norms by their physical presence, their style of functioning and their control over what could be projected as the 'transcendental' norm.³⁴

Another dimension of this central focus becomes noticeable with the crystallization of the Puranic order, implying the ascendancy of the Bhakti ideology. In sectarian terms, Bhakti could lead to growth of conflicts in society,³⁵ but from the standpoint of the State, Bhakti could, perhaps much more effectively than *Dharmasastra*-oriented norms, be an instrument of integration of men.³⁶ If there was opposition between *Dharmasastra*-oriented norms and community norms, Bhakti, at least ideally, provided no incompatibility. Local cults and sacred centres could be brought within the expansive Puranic fold through the process of identification. Though originating in an earlier period, temple grew to be the major institutional locus of Bhakti in the early medieval period,³⁷ and for temporal power, the temple, as symbol in material space of the sacred domain, could provide a direct link with that domain in two ways: (i) the King could seek to approximate the sacred domain through a process of identification with the divinity enshrined in the temple. The practice initiated by the Pallavas and augmented by the Colas, taken to similar to the Devaraja cult of south-east Asia, is an example of such a process;³⁸ (ii) the second way was to surrender temporal power to the divinity, the cult of which was raised to the status of the central cult and to act as its agent. This process is illustrated by the stages through which the cult of Jagannatha emerged as the central cult in Orissa and the ritual surrender of temporal power to the divinity by King Anangabhima.³⁹ The centrality of the cult in relation to others in this process implied the centrality of its agents as well.⁴⁰ The Cola and Cōḍaṅga practices are perhaps facets of the same concern—to have direct links with the sacred domain.

The process of legitimation thus cannot be viewed simply in terms of a newly emerged local polity seeking validation through linkage with a respectable Ksatriya ancestry or by underlining its local roots, the constant validation of temporal authority really relates to the complex of ideological apparatuses through which temporal power was reaching out to its temporal domain. '(If) the State (is) a special apparatus, exhibiting a peculiar material framework that cannot be reduced to the given relations of political domination',⁴¹ then it becomes imperative to study the pattern of use of the available ideological apparatuses which constituted an integral part of the overall political order.⁴² From the perspective of the interdependence between temporal power and sacred authority, it becomes

understandable that assignments such a *brahmadeyas* and *devadanas* were not an administrative but a socio-religious necessity for the temporal power, the earthly agents of the sacred domain—and such agents were ultimately defined by the changing contexts of both the temporal and the sacred order—generated a pattern of dominance in their areas of preserve, but it would not be compatible with the argument presented here to generalize either that temporal power in early medieval India was a tool in the hands of the brahmanas and the temple managers,⁴³ or that massive support to the representatives of the sacred domain meant parcellization of temporal power, an assumption which in any case will have to presuppose that temporal power emanated from a single source. It needs also to be underlined that the duality of the temporal and sacred domains does not necessarily imply that the domains and their interrelationship remained unchanged from the Vedic times to eternity.⁴⁴ From the standpoint of temporal power Vedism, Puranism, Tantrism and other forms of heterodoxy could simultaneously acquire the connotation of the sacred domain.⁴⁵ What is required is to analyze the regional and group perception of the sacred domain. This will help us understand the curious contradiction between general support and cases of persecution, the overwhelming domination of the brahmana groups and temples in south India juxtaposed with the incorporation of Jaina tenets in the religious policies of individual rulers of Western India⁴⁶ or the appointment of a *devotpatananayaka*, an official in charge of uprooting images of gods from temples and of confiscation of temple property, by an early medieval ruler of Kashmir⁴⁷. Taking even the uncommon cases as aberrations would be to bypass the issue, the point is how in the early medieval context the relevance of the sacred domain was defined by temporal power.

Another aspect of the complexity we have talked about concerns the territorial limits of the temporal domain. Temporal domain was defined by the extent of royal power but Kingdom was not defined in concrete territorial terms; even the *janapada* or *rastriya*, one of the constituent limbs of the State in the *Saptanga* formulation, was not 'internally coherent and closed towards the outside'.⁴⁸ The State was thus not a static unit but one that was naturally dynamic.⁴⁹ Even the territory of the Mauryas, which for the period of Asoka alone can be clearly defined by the distribution of his edicts, was designated as *vijaya* or *rajavisaya*⁵⁰—an area over which the rule of the emperor extended. The territorial composition of the Mauryan empire in Asoka's period can be characterized as a combination of several nodes such as Pataliputra, Ujjayini, Taksasila, Tosali and Suvarnagiri as well as areas of such peoples as Bhojas, Rathikas, Pulindas, Nabhakas and that of the *atavikas* or forest people.⁵¹ Such fluid situations—for there is no guarantee that this territorial composition remained static throughout the Mauryan period—are schematized in the *mandala* concept of the political theorists who locate the *vijigishu* at the core of the *mandala*,⁵² and the 'royal mystique'⁵³ represented by the *Cakravartin* model of kingship, is a logical follow-up of this formulation. It has been a bane of

writings on the political history of early and early medieval India to search for approximations of the *Cakravarti* among kings of big-sized states;⁵⁴ the ideal is only a recognition of the existence of disparate polities and of military success as a precondition of the *Cakravarti* status which was superior to the status represented by the heads of other polities.

IV

Within the parameters of interdependence of temporal and sacred domains, and more precisely the essentially dynamic contours of these domains, the political processes of early medieval India may be sought to be identified. I would venture to begin by suggesting that political processes may be seen in terms of parallels with contemporary economic, social and religious processes. The essence of the economic process lay in the horizontal spread of rural agrarian settlements, and this remains true even for the early historical period, despite the accent often put on urban economy or money economy of the period.⁵⁵ The process of caste formation, the chief mechanism of which was the horizontal spread of the dominant ideology of social order based on *varna*-division—despite, again, the ascendancy of heterodoxy in the early historical period⁵⁶—remained the essence of the social process which drew widely dispersed and originally outlying groups into a structure which allowed them in a large measure to retain their original character except that this character was now defined with reference to the structure.⁵⁷ In the related religious process too the major trend was integration of local cults, rituals and sacred centres into a pantheistic supralocal structure, the mechanism of integration was by seeking affiliation with a deity or a sacred centre which had come to acquire supralocal significance.⁵⁸ Applied to the study of the political process, these parallels would suggest consideration of three levels: presence of established norms and nuclei of State society, horizontal spread of State society implying transformation of pre-State polities into State polities, and integration of local polities into structures that transcended the bounds of local polities. In other words, in trying to understand the political processes and structures in early medieval India it may be more profitable to start by juxtaposing the processes of the formation of local state polities and supralocal polities than by assessing the structures in terms of a perennial oscillation between forces of centralization and decentralization.

The parallelism drawn here is in a sense misleading since in polity, as in society or religion, no given structures could be immutable in view of the underlying dynamism I have already drawn attention to, but the point about process as essentially a range of interactions will still remain valid. The specific complexities of early medieval political formation have, therefore, to be stated in clear empirical terms. The first major point which may be put forward with regard to post-Gupta polity is that State society, represented by emergence of ruling lineages, had covered all nuclear regions and had progressed well into peripheral areas by the end of the

Gupta period. I assume details of political geography need not be cited to substantiate this generalization. And yet, it is significant that inscriptions from the seventh century alone, from different regions of India, begin to produce elaborate genealogies, either aligning alleged local roots of ruling lineages with a mythical tradition or by tracing their descent from mythical heroic lineages.⁵⁹ The emergence of genealogy has been taken as a shift from 'yajna to vamsa',⁶⁰ indicating a change in the nature of kingship, but in the totality of its geographical distribution, genealogical evidence has a more significant implication—proliferation of actual ruling lineages defining the domain of political power. State society even in nuclear areas did not have a stable locus, mobilization of military strength could not only displace a ruling lineage but could create a new locus and a new network of political relations. The shift from the Badami Calukyas to the Rastrakutas and then again to the Calukyas of Kalyana, or from the Pallavas and the Pandyas to the Colas was not simply a change from one lineage to another, each change redefined the locus of the State in a geographical context which had nevertheless experienced long and uninterrupted history of State society. In such contexts, the use of the term 'State formation', primary, secondary or even tertiary, would be highly inappropriate and would obscure distinction with areas which were indeed experiencing passage from pre-State to State society on a significant scale. The distinction remains valid throughout Indian history—for reasons of uneven pace of change—and transition from pre-State to State society has been documented through medieval to modern times.⁶¹

I have been using such rather vague expressions as 'lineage domain'^{61a} and 'State society'^{61b} without clear reference to the State in the early medieval context. This vagueness arises out of some definitional problems which could be clearly stated by working out the geography of the loci of political power over a few centuries. I can however make a very brief reference to a selected span of time—the eleventh century—the two reasons for considering the span as significant being (i) evidence for this period—particularly from south India—has recently evoked considerable urge for re-evaluation of commonly used concepts on State, (ii) eleventh century, in relation to the centuries preceding and following it, does not present any major fluctuations in the list and geography of the distribution of ruling lineages. At a rough estimate the number of ruling lineages of this century could be put around forty,⁶² the number is reconstructed on the basis of specific references to lineage names and excludes cases where, despite use of regal title or title approximating it, descent is not clearly indicated. In a sense the reconstruction of such numbers would be useless since I am not sure that we can convert these numbers into the number of States and say that forty States existed in India in the eleventh century. Terms such as Cola State, Calukya State or Pala State in place of 'kingdoms' or 'empires' may not raise serious objections, but I am doubtful if we would be equally justified in going ahead with the

use of this terminology in relation to, say, Kadambas of Vanavasi, Hangal and Goa,⁶³ the Cahamanas of Sakambhari, Broach, Dholpur, Pratabgarh, Nadol and Ranthambhor,⁶⁴ Paramaras of Malwa, Lata, Candravati, Arbuda and Suvarnagiri,⁶⁵ similarly, Nolamba State, Bana State or Ratta State,⁶⁶ signifying the domains of these respective lineages, may be found equally inappropriate. The reason is not simply the status of a lineage, the point really is whether there is always a necessary correspondence between a lineage and a static territorial limit. Early medieval evidence suggests that this was not so. I have cited the cases of the Kadambas and the Cahamanas, many more are readily available. The Kalacuris, an ancient lineage, are found in western Deccan in a comparatively early period but they established several nuclei of power, as in Tripuri and Ratanpur, in the upper Narmada basin in the early medieval period, whereas one of its segments ventured into such a remote area of northeastern India that it came to be designated as Sarayupara.⁶⁷ The movements of Karnatas outside Karnataka, although the particular lineages involved are not always specified, led to the establishment of new ruling families in Bengal and Bihar,⁶⁸ and possibly also to the formation of such Rajput clans as Solankis and Rathods.⁶⁹ The ruling lineage in its entirety is the point of reference in the case of major lineages in many records, as suggested by expressions like *Pallavanam* or *Kadambanam*.⁷⁰ What I am, therefore, arguing is that since the changing distribution patterns of ruling lineages do not necessarily correspond to static territorial limits, an initial study of polity has to start with an analysis of the formation of lineages and of the pattern of network they represent, both territorially and in inter-lineage combinations, at *different levels of organization of political power*. Such analysis may ultimately clarify relations in the structures of supra-local polities, which alone seem to be issues in historiographical debates on the polity of early medieval India. The focus then will have to shift from extremities like 'virtual absence of' or 'construction and collapse of' administrative apparatus. In fact, as empirical evidence from regions like Rajasthan suggests, distribution of political authority could be organized by a network of lineages within the framework of the monarchical form of polity, retaining at the same time areas of bureaucratic functioning.⁷¹ A remark, made with reference to medieval Deccan, seems pertinent here. "The development of State bureaucracy and private lordly organization was neither mutually exclusive nor confined to two different stages of a process. In this agrarian society private and State interests developed simultaneously and in terms of one another."⁷²

The formation and mobilization of lineage power did not, of course, develop along a single channel, it could involve colonization of areas of pre-State polity and change of the economic pattern of the region by expansive lineages,⁷³ in particular contexts, emergence of ruling lineages would correspond to 'primary State formation' and introduction of the monarchical ideology of rule, it could even be simple replacement of one lineage by another. All these processes could and did operate simulta-

neously but—and this needs to be underlined if we are to take an all-India perspective—not in isolation from one another. Politics were interactive and interlocking—if nothing else, inventories of battles fought in the early medieval period would be a sure index of this—and this often resulted in the formation of new blocks and networks of power in which the original identity of a lineage was obliterated.⁷⁴

Two further points about lineages as bases for the study of political power may be made. First, Kalacuri or Cahamana evidence has shown that lineages could be amazingly expansive but there are other levels at which relationships between lineages and territories can be examined. Pre-tenth century evidence from Tamilnadu has been cited to show that the nucleus of the power of a lineage could be an area comprised by two or three districts. The relationship between the lineage and its territory was expressed in the form of the name of the area in which the lineage was dominant, examples of this are common in the south and in the Deccan. Cola-nadu, Cera-nadu, Tondai-nadu, Oyma-nadu, Irungola-padi, Ganga-padi, Nulamba-padi, to mention a few, bear out this relationship. The growth of a lineage into a supra-local or supra-regional power would result in the reorganization of the *nadus* or *padis* into administrative units, as suggested by the emergence of the *vala-nadus* and *mandalams* in the Cola State,⁷⁵ but, from our point of view, what is important is that such administrative units emerged by integrating pre-existing lineage areas. It must be conceded that the pattern available for the south and the Deccan cannot be applied to all regions, in Bengal, for example, such details of lineage geography are simply not available. Elsewhere, as in early medieval Rajasthan and Gujarat, the trend seems to have been toward the parcellization of the area variously called Gurjara-bhumi, Gurjaratra, Gurjara-dharitri, Gurjaradhara—all obviously derived from the ethnic term Gurjara⁷⁶—into strongholds of several lineages, only some of which traced their descent from the Gurjara stock.⁷⁷

Secondly, the formation of ruling lineages can be seen also from the perspective of the social mobility process in early medieval India. In a situation of openended polity and of congenial climate for 'Ksatriyization',⁷⁸ any lineage or segment of larger ethnic group, with a coherent organization of force, could successfully make a bid for political power and lay the foundation of a large state structure. The origin of the Hoysala State, which lasted for about three centuries and a half, goes back to the *malepas* or the hill chiefs of the Soseyur forests and the hill forces that the chiefs could command at that stage.⁷⁹ Here too the pattern of the formation of a lineage and the level of power a lineage would reach would not be identical in all areas. Generally, the mobility upward was from a base which can be broadly characterized as agrarian, and political changes from the seventh century, again in western India, provide an idea of the sequences in the political mobility process. We have noted that Gurjaratra or Gurjarabhumi was the base from which several lineages tracing descent from the Gurjaras emerged, the separation of the ruling lineages

from the common stock is suggested by the general name Gurjara-Pratihara used by the lineages, and while the base of one such lineage in the Jodhpur area seems to have been established by displacing pre-existing groups, in the Alwar area in eastern Rajasthan there is clear indication of a sharp distinction which had developed between Gurjara cultivators and the Gurjara-Pratihara ruling lineage⁸⁰ It is on this base that the Gurjara-Pratihara supra-regional power, which began with the expansion of one of the lineages and extended at one stage as far east as Bengal, was built up Elsewhere, for example the presence of Vellala generals and warrior elements and of feudatories in Pallava and Cola polities in south India⁸¹ or the formation of the Damaras into a major political group in the Lohara period (C A D 1000-1170) in Kashmir⁸² would suggest a similar process of the emergence of potentially dominant elements from within local agrarian bases

V

The structure of supra-local or supra-regional polities has then to become understandable in a large measure with reference to its substratum components, and it is in the characterization of this reference that the perspectives of historians substantially differ Before the debate is taken up for review, the geographical loci of larger polities need to be briefly touched upon. The larger polities tended to emerge, throughout Indian history, in what geographers call 'nuclear' regions,⁸³ providing such polities with a resource base potentially much richer and easier to integrate administratively than relatively isolated pockets where 'State formation', a chronologically phased phenomenon, would reveal less integrative patterns of polity Ganges basin, Kaveri basin, Krishna-Godavari *doab*, Raichur *doab* are cited as examples of 'nuclear' regions, and indeed the large State structures of the early medieval period all thrived in these regions Two qualifications are, however, necessary. First, 'nuclear' region is finally a historical-chronological and not purely geographical category, the nuclearity of a region is related to how historical factors converge on it and not merely to its resource potential Warangal, away from the nuclear Krishna-Godavari *doab*, remained a base of the large structure of the Kakatiya State,⁸⁴ the Caulukya State of Gujarat, with its base at Anahilapataka, emerged in a region which, from the point of view of its basic agrarian resource potential, was not sufficiently 'nuclear'⁸⁵ Secondly, large polities did not necessarily originate in nuclear areas, military mobilization could generate movement toward nuclear areas and result in major transformations in polity The movement of the Pratiharas from Rajasthan to Kanauj, of the Palas from southeast Bengal to the middle and the lower Ganges basin,⁸⁶ the descent of the Hoysalas from the hilly region of Soseyur forests into the areas of south Karnataka held by the Gangas for centuries produced steady growth of political structures of substantial dimensions in these regions.

I have already noted in the beginning that recognition of the disper-

sed foci of power was present even in traditional historiography in the form of the formulation of 'feudal tendencies', although the formulation was applied generally to a pattern of polity which was considered not sufficiently large in terms of its approximation to an all-India empire and which could not, therefore, be considered centralized. Recent perspectives specifically related to only early medieval India have shifted from acceptance of 'centralization' and 'bureaucracy' as essential characteristics of large State structures to detailed analyses of dispersed foci of power within such structures. This concern appears to be common both to those who characterize these structures in terms of 'feudal polity' and their critics to whom the 'feudal' model is either 'outworn' or an exclusively European formation which hinders a proper understanding of the uniqueness of the Indian political system⁸⁷. Where does then lie the difference? Reducing the discussion to the level of political relations alone, the fundamental difference seems to lie, as I understand it, between their respective notions of 'parcellized sovereignty' and 'shared sovereignty'. Opposition to the 'feudal' model⁸⁸ is best articulated in the model of 'segmentary state' which is currently bandied about, at least in the circle of Western Indologists, as a major breakthrough in our understanding of traditional Indian political system. The model which is directly lifted from the analysis of a pre-State polity in East Africa but, in the Indian context, is mixed up with concepts of Kingship derived from literature, presents the following characteristics of the 'segmentary state'. (i) limited territorial sovereignty which further weakens gradually as one moves from the core to the periphery, and often 'shades off into ritual hegemony', (ii) the existence of a centralized core with quasi-autonomous foci of administration, (iii) the pyramidal repetition of administrative structures and functions in the peripheral foci, (iv) absence of absolute monopoly of legitimate force at the centre, and (v) shifting allegiances of the periphery of the system.⁸⁹ In the schema of segmentary State, as it has been variously worked out in the Indian context, the major integrative factor is 'ritual sovereignty' rather than 'political sovereignty', and attempts at explications of the concept of 'ritual sovereignty' locate the King as the principal ritualist. The 'new modality of relations between the chiefs and the King', one writer argues in the context of the later phase of Pallava polity, (which) 'represents the expansion of a regional system into a trans-regional system' is nothing much more than a shift from an earlier ritual system and the different foci of power nothing much more than ritual accessories.⁹⁰ It is the Kingship which is 'incorporative' and, one may say by extending this logic, whatever be the territorial spread of the State, it is ritual space.

All this is fine example of study of the State *sans* politics. While the analytic inseparability of 'State structure from State ritual'⁹¹ is understandable, particularly in south India where material for the study of such relationship is plentifully available, the subordination of political and economic dimensions of the State structure to its ritual dimension has led to inevitable neglect of two imperatives under which a State is expected to

operate (i) stability in its power structure, (ii) resource mobilization⁹² which, logically, cannot be separated from the process of redistribution of resources to integrative elements within the State structure. To briefly illustrate the implications of these omissions, too narrow a definition of the 'core' of the Cola territory would leave unanswered why the Cola territorial reorganizations included apparently peripheral areas like Ganga-vadi and Nolamba-vadi⁹³ or why territorial conquests of strategic areas and areas of resource potential sought to eliminate existing powerholders and to convert them, in some cases at least, into extensions of patrimonial holdings⁹⁴. The concept of 'core' area as remaining permanently limited to the lineage area in the context of a supra-local polity is untenable, its definition too has to be seen more as functional than geographical⁹⁵. The second omission has resulted in the postulate of the 'politics of plunder' as the major mechanism of resource acquisition and redistribution⁹⁶—in fact, a mechanism which is essentially identical with the one present in the polity of the 'chiefdoms' of the Sangam age⁹⁷. It is indeed curious that the postulate of the 'politics of plunder' has been put forward in relation to the Cola State in which vast agrarian surplus sustained integrative elements in society and in which State penetration into growing networks of trade and exchange could diversify and expand its resource bases enormously⁹⁸.

The 'segmentary state' model or the concept of 'ritual sovereignty' cannot in fact resolve the problem of the political basis of integration since a rigid use of the 'segmentary state' concept relegates the different foci of power to the 'periphery' and does not really see them as components of the State structure. The phenomenon of different foci of power was not peculiarly south Indian but cut across all major political structures of the early medieval period, and there is thus a need for a common perspective, irrespective of the quality or the volume of material available from different regions. These diffused foci of 'quasi-autonomous' power are represented by what is broadly labelled as the *samanta* system which, although present in some form or the other in all major polities, has not been taken proper cognizance of by the protagonists of the 'segmentary state' model⁹⁹. *Samanta* is of course a broad-spectrum category and encompasses a proliferating range of designations in use in the early medieval period. Not all the designations emerge simultaneously, but by the twelfth-thirteenth centuries such terms as *mahasamanta*, *samanta*, *mahamandalesvara*, *mandalesvara*, *ranaka*, *rauta*, *ihakkura* and so on came to be indicative of a political order which was non-bureaucratic and in the context of which, in the overall structure of polity, the *rajapurusas* constituting the bureaucracy had only a limited part to play¹⁰⁰. The order assumed the characteristics of a hierarchical formation, and this is clear not only in the binary hierarchy of *mahasamanta* and *samanta* or *mahamandalesvara* and *mandalesvara* but in the attempted schematization of the order in early medieval texts like the *Aparajitapreccha* as well.¹⁰¹ The *samanta* in its trans-political connotation corresponded to the landed

aristocracy' of the period; in addition, the spate of land assignments and other forms of prestation to various categories of donees, including those rendering military service to the State,¹⁰³ were factors which, apart from the presence of the *samanta* landed aristocracy, weakened the hold of the State over both the polity and the revenue potential of its constituent territorial units

The composition of the elites in any given State structure may have been varied, but the argument that I am trying to formulate requires that we begin with an explanation of the formation of a political structure rather than with a statement of its decentralized character. In other words, if the *samanta* system was as has been suggested, the keynote of early medieval polity, then it needs to be recognized that from a pattern of relations characterized by *grahana-moksa* (i.e., capture and release) of the early Gupta phase,¹⁰³ there was a shift toward a pattern in which the *samantas* were integrated into the structure of polity and in which the overlord-subordinate relation came to be dominant over other levels of relations in the structure. The political exigency of this integration from the Gupta period specially—and I posit *political* integration as a counterpoint to the decentralized polity of the feudal model—lay in the interrelatedness of polities caused by what I have called the horizontal spread of State society and represented geographically, by the lineages at their varied local bases. The exigency is expressed with some clarity in the following quote: "The larger the unit the greater the King's power, and hence the greater his chances of being efficient within his geographical scope. Hence the constant urge to conquer."¹⁰⁴ The structure of polities was only partly based on elimination of existing bases of power, by expansion of the kin network of the lineage that emerged as dominant or by organization of a bureaucracy that could connect different nodes in the structure, but the fact that political relations were regularly expressed as between the overlord and his feudatories suggests that the dominant mode in the formation of the structure was by encapsulation of the existing bases of power, the spearhead in the structure being the overlord.

At the current stage of research on the political history of the period it would be impossible to advance any generalization, from the vast corpus of early medieval material, regarding the composition of the feudatories, but two suggestions may be made: (i) since the emergence of the overlord himself had its basis mostly in local lineage power, the expansion of a lineage into supra-local power was through pooling military resources and perhaps other forms of support of other lineages,¹⁰⁵ (ii) more importantly, pooling not only required a circulation or redistribution of resources¹⁰⁶ acquired in the process of expansion but required a system of ranking as well. These suggestions are in consonance with integrative polity and the transformation of the *samanta* into a vital component of the political structure is itself an evidence of ranking and in turn clarifies the political basis of integration. Ranking was associated with roles and services, and it may be postulated that a correlation was worked out be-

tween such roles as those of *dutaka*, *sanphivgrahika*, *dandandyaka* and so on and ranking in the *samanta* hierarchy.¹⁰⁷ The gradual crystallization of ranking permeated the early medieval society to such an extent that statuses of members within individual ruling lineages came to be expressed in terms of ranks¹⁰⁸ and that ranks extended to even non-ruling groups and individuals.¹⁰⁹ And in terms of social process, the transformation of political ranking could in the long run take the form of caste ranking.¹¹⁰

Rank as the basis of political organization implies differential access to the centre as also shifts within the system of ranking. The description in the *Aparajitapreccha*, although built up around an overlord of the ideal *cakravarti* model, nevertheless points to the relative positioning of different categories of ruling elites including *dandanayakas*, *mandalesas*, *mandalikas*, *mahasamantas*, *samantas*, *laghusamantas*, *caturasikas*, *vajraputras* and so on. The system of ranking in relation to the overlord as offered in the text which was composed at the Caulukyan court in Gujarat may be reflective more of the text's perception of *Cakravarti* power than an actual order, but significantly, a correlation between territorial political hold and rank can be detected in its description.¹¹¹ Since the basis of territorial and political hold was not static, rank was not static either. In fact, even inadequate studies available so far would suggest that ranks held by individual families underwent changes,¹¹² that ranks varied from one generation to the next¹¹³ and that aspirations for higher ranks were operative within individual political structures.¹¹⁴ If the idea of ranking as the political basis of the organization of both local and supra-local structures be accepted, then it may be followed up for locating the potential sources of tension on the political plane between the rank-holders as also between them and the overlord. Channels open for diffusion of such tension would not have been many, expansion of kinship network, itself encompassed by the system of ranking, assignments in return for services as a means of displacement of locally entrenched lineage power or diversification of the composition of ruling elites by drawing in non-ruling groups in the system of ranking¹¹⁵ could only create new loci of power. Crisis was thus built into the process of the formation of the structures, a concrete statement of the crisis as it manifested itself in individual cases is a detail which has still to be satisfactorily worked out.

IV

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate what I said in the beginning—what has been presented above is essentially a statement of my groping for a framework for the study of early medieval polity. I have tried to argue that the genesis of the specific features of early medieval polity cannot be satisfactorily comprehended either by isolating a single unit and analyzing the relationship of its segments in ritual terms or by the notion of decentralized polity in which bases of power are created from above through individual or institutional agents. If we take an all-India perspective, the shifting political geography of the lineages of the period

seems, on the other hand, to suggest that the structure of early medieval polity was a logical development from the territorially limited State society of the early historical period to a gradual but far greater penetration of State society into local agrarian and peripheral levels, generating continuous fissions at such levels. The feudatory and other intermediary strata in the early medieval structures of polity, in the absence of a definite correlation between service assignments and the formation of these strata, may thus be seen in terms of 'integrative polity',¹¹⁶ with potential sources of tension built into the structures. The early medieval phase of polity was perhaps in a way an intermediate phase—a prelude to the exercise of greater control by the medieval State through its nobility and its regulated system of service assignments, but then if the broad-spectrum *samanta* category was a dominant element in early medieval polity, so did the broad-spectrum category of 'zamindars' continue as an 'irritant' in the medieval State structure.¹¹⁷

[For constraints of space, I have tried to limit the references to recent writings and to use earlier publications mostly for the purpose of comparison. My thanks are due to Sri Asok V Settar and especially to Sri P.K. Basant, research students at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, for the help that I have received from them in the preparation of this Address.]

- 1 The stereotype of the 'dark period' however seems to persist, see Simon Digby in T Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume I c. 1200—c. 1750, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 45-47.
- 2 Evidence of recent interest in the study of the early State will be found in the range of contributions and bibliographies in two recent publications. H J M Claessen and Peter Skalnik ed., *The Early State*, Mouton Publishers, 1978, *The Study of the State*, Mouton Publishers, 1981. The focus of most of the contributions in such publications is on the emergence of the early State which is often distinguished only from the modern industrial State and is therefore of little value in understanding processes of change. Relevant ideas on the emergence of the State have been used for the study of the pre-State and origin of the State society in India by Romila Thapar, 'State formation in early India,' *International Social Science Journal*, 32.4 (1980), 655-669 and *From Lineage to State* (in press) and by R S Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1983, 'Taxation and State Formation in Northern India in Pre-Maurya times (c. 600-300 B.C.)' (manuscript), 'From Gopati to Bhupati (a review of the changing position of the king), *Studies in History*, 2.2 (1980), 1-10.
- 3 It is necessary to keep in mind that social and economic history by itself is not a sufficient guarantee of the quality of history. Most available monographs on social and economic history of the period, including my own, are no more interesting readings than dynastic accounts.
- 4 The dominant trend in the writing of the political history of early medieval India is of the form of reconstruction of dynastic accounts, and the trend carried to an extreme has yielded more than one monograph for a single 'dynasty'. We have thus at least three monographs on the Yadavas and the same number of works on the Candellas. For a very useful critique of dynastic reconstruction, through 'concatenation' of distinct segments of the

same ruling lineage see David P Henige, 'Some phantom dynasties of early and medieval India Epigraphic evidence and the abhorrence of a vacuum', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 38 3 (1975)

- 5 I have only to refer here to the statement made by Perry Anderson in the Foreword to his *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (Verso Edition, London, 1979, II), 'Today, when 'history from below' has become a watch-word in both Marxist and non-Marxist circles, and has produced major gains in our understanding of the past, it is nevertheless necessary to recall one of the basic axioms of historical materialism that secular struggle between classes is ultimately resolved at the *political*—not at the economic or cultural level of society In other words, it is the construction and destruction of State which seal the basic shifts in the relations of production A 'history from above' . is thus no less necessary than a 'history from below' Elsewhere (404) he writes ' pre-capitalist modes of production cannot be defined *except* via their political, legal and ideological superstructures, since these are what determine the extra-economic coercion that specifies them '
- 6 A few works which illustrate this interest in what may be called the post-J N Sarkar phase may be cited Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740*, 3rd edition, Delhi, 1979, M Athar Ali, *The Mughal nobility under Aurangzeb*, Asia Publishing House, 1968, Iqtidar Alam Khan, *The Political Biography of a Mughal noble Mumtaz Khan Khan-i-Khanan 1497-1575*, Orient Longman, 1973, and J F Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975
- 7 'Traditional polity' is implied in the statements and titles of writings on disparate periods of Indian history, in which a long-term perspective is absent and in most of which the accent is on Kingship and rituals associated with Kingship, see for example, the following collections, Richard G Fox, ed , *Realm and Region in Traditional India*, Delhi, 1977, R J. Moore, ed , *Tradition and Politics in South Asia*, Delhi 1979, J F Richards, ed , *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* South Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison Publication Series-Publication No. 3, 1978 S N Eisenstadt's typologies of 'centralized historical bureaucratic empires or States' in which he curiously clubs together Gupta, Maurya and the Mughal empires as 'several ancient Hindu States', also essentially correspond to the notion of 'traditional polity', *The Political System of Empires*, New York, 1969
- 8 That 'Oriental Despotism' characterizes changeless polity and society will be clear from the following statement of K A Wittfogel, " varying forms of semicomplex hydraulic property and society prevailed in India almost from the dawn of written history to the 19th Century", *Oriental Despotism A Comparative Study of Total Power*, Yale University Press, 7th Printing, 1970, 260 For the genesis of the concept of Oriental Despotism, its incorporation into Marx's notion of 'Asiatic mode' and its relevance in the Indian context see Perry Anderson, *op cit*, Irfan Habib, 'An examination of Wittfogel's theory of Oriental Despotism', *Enquiry*, 6, 53-73, 'Problems of Marxist Historical Analysis', in *Science and Human Progress* Essays in honour of Prof D D Kosambi, Bombay, 1974, 34-47, idem, 'Classifying economic formations in pre-colonial India' (manuscript), Romila Thapar, *The Past and Prejudice*, Delhi, 1972, H J M Claessen and P Skalnik, 'The Early State Theories and Hypotheses' In *The Early State*, 7-8 Recently D Lorenzen has argued ('Imperialism and Ancient Indian Historiography' in S N Mukherjee, ed *History and Thought* Essays in honour of A.L Basham, Calcutta, 1982, 84-102) that Oriental Despotism was a key concept in pro-Imperialist interpretations of ancient Indian polity and society and that the concept is present in the writings of nationalist historians in its inverted version.

- 9 I refer here to the model of the 'segmentary State', constructed by A South all on the basis of his study of a pre-State polity in East Africa, *Alur Society: A Study in processes and types of domination*, Cambridge, 1953, for further discussion, idem, 'A critique of the typology of States and Political Systems' in M. Banton, ed., *Political Systems and the Distribution of Power*, ASA Monographs 2, Tavistock Publications, 1968, 113-140. The model is found applicable in the Indian context in relation to the *mandala* theory by J C Heesterman, 'Power and Authority in Indian tradition', in R J Moore, ed., *op cit*, 77-78, by Burton Stein in relation to south Indian polity from the Cola period onward 'The segmentary State in South Indian history' in R G Fox, ed *op cit*, 1-51 and *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, 1980, and by R G Fox in the context of the organization of the Rajput clans in Uttar Pradesh in late Mughal period (without, however, much reference to the Mughals'), *King, Clan, Raja and Rule: State-hinterland relations in pre-industrial India*, Berkeley, The University of California, 1971.
- 10 Frank Perlin, 'The pre-colonial Indian State in History and Epistemology: A reconstruction of societal formation in the Western Deccan from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth century', in H J M Claessen and Peter Skalnik, ed, *The Study of the State*, 276.
- 11 See, for example, A S Altekar, *State and Government in ancient India*, reprint of 3rd edition, Delhi, 1972, Chapters 16-17. In the context of south India, while T V Mahalingam (*South Indian Polity*, University of Madras, 2nd edition, 1967, ch. 1, sec 2) talks of checks on royal absolutism and the presence of *samantas* or *mandalesvaras*, K A Nilakanta Sastri (*The Colas*, reprint of 2nd edition, University of Madras, 1975, 447-48) characterizes Cola polity as indicating change from 'somewhat tribal chieftaincy of the earlier time' to 'the almost Byzantine royalty of Rajaraja and his successors'. For relevant discussion see Lorenzen *op cit*.
- 12 R C. Majumdar, for example, writes in his preface to *The Struggle for Empire* (Vol 5 of the History and Culture of the Indian people, Bombay, 1957, xliii) 'This volume deals with the transition period that marks the end of independent Hindu rule'. See also K M Panikkar's Foreword to Dasarath Sharma's *Early Chohan Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959. R C P Singh (*Kingship in northern India, Cir 600 A D -1200 A D.*, Delhi, 1968, ch 8) analyzes this failure in terms of the nature of Hindu Kingship. Most works on the political history of the period dealing with change in loci of power are charged with communal overtones, completely ignoring the fact that such shifts were constantly taking place in Indian history.
- 13 D Sharma, *op cit*, ch 27.
- 14 B P Mazumdar, *Socio-economic history of northern India (1030-1194 A D)*, Calcutta, 1960, preface.
- 15 Altekar, *op. cit*, 388.
- 16 H.C Raychaudhuri (*Political History of Ancient India*, 6th edition, University of Calcutta, 1953, 208) speaks of *mandalika-rajyas* in the period of Bimbisara as 'corresponding perhaps to the Earls and Counts of medieval European polity', A L. Basham speaks of quasi-feudal order in the pre-Mauryan age and when 'that empire broke up Mauryan bureaucracy gave way to quasi-feudalism once more', *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, Calcutta, 1964, 5.
- 17 Serious analytical work of this genre starts with D D Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, and R S Sharma's *Indian Feudalism, C 300-1200*, University of Calcutta, 1965, is the first thoroughly researched monograph on the subject. In terms of documentation another important work is by B N S Yadava, *Society and Culture in*

- northern India in the twelfth century*, Allahabad, 1973. The literature on 'Indian Feudalism' is of course growing and useful bibliographical references will be found in R S Sharma and D N Jha, 'The economic history of India up to A D 1200 trends and prospects', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 17 1, 48-80, D N Jha, 'Early Indian Feudalism: A historiographical critique', Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, Ancient India Section, 40th session, Waltair, 1979, H Mukhia, 'Was there Feudalism in Indian History?' Presidential Address, Medieval India Section, Indian History Congress, Waltair 1979, B.N.S. Yadava, 'The problem of the emergence of feudal relations in early India', Presidential Address, Ancient India Section, 41st session, Bombay, 1980
- 18 Compare, for example, two articles by Nicholas B Dirks written on two different periods of south Indian history, i) 'Political authority and structural changes in early south Indian history', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 13 2 (1976), 125-158, ii) 'The structure and meaning of political relations in a south Indian little Kingdom', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 13 2 (1979), 169-206 B Stein too (*Peasant State and Society*), attempts to see change from the Cola to the Vijaynagar period. Their perception of change is, of course, not in terms of feudal polity.
 - 19 Detailed documentation is found only in R S Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, ch 2 which analyzes 'feudal polity' in three Kingdoms, B P Majumdar, *op. cit.*, chs 1-2, and B N S Yadava, *Society and Culture*, chs 3-4, for regional pattern see D D Kosambi, 'Origins of Feudalism in Kashmir', *Journal of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1956-57, 108-120 and Krishna Mohan, *Early Medieval History of Kashmir* (with special reference to the Loharas, A D 1003-1171), Delhi, 1981, ch 4. An earlier work, not usually cited but deserving attention for its wealth of material, is N C Bandyopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, ed by N N Bhattacharyya, Delhi, 1980.
 - 20 R S Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*, 2nd edition, Delhi 1968, ch 15, Kosambi, *An Introduction*, ch 9, B N S Yadava, 'Some aspects of the changing order in India during the Saka-Kusana Age' in G R Sharma, ed, *Kusana Studies*, University of Allahabad, 1968, 75-90.
 - 20a This supposition is based on two sets of evidence i) reference in the *Arthashastra* (5 3) to payment of state officials in coined money, ii) actual circulation of coined money in the Mauryan period. However, there seems to be contradiction in the *Arthashastra* itself, cf, 5 3 with 2.1 7. Even 5 3, which deals with payment of state officials, states, 'He should fix (wages for) the work of servants at one quarter of the revenue, or by payment to servants' (R P Kangle's translation, 2nd edition, Bombay, 1972, 302). More importantly, there is no necessary correlation between circulation of coined money and payment in cash. This will hold true not only for the post-Mauryan period to the 5th century at least but, for the medieval period as well, although in the medieval period the remuneration was computed in cash.
 - 21 Interestingly, Beni Prasad, as early as 1928, held the 'unitary' character of the Mauryan State as suspect, *The State in Ancient India*, Allahabad, 1928, 192, Romila Thapar has considerably changed her views on the character of the Mauryan State compare *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 1973, ch 4 with her 'The State as Empire' in H J M Claessen and P Skalnik, *The Study of the State*, 409-426 and *From Lineage to State*, ch 3. For other discussions, I W Mabbett, *Truth, Myth and Politics in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1972, chs 5-6, S J Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, Cambridge University Press, 1976,

- pt 1 ch 5, Heesterman, 'Power and Authority' *loc cit.*, 66
- 22 S Seneviratne, 'Kalinga and Andhra The Process of Secondary State formation in early India' in H J M Claessen and P Skalník, ed., *The Study of the State*, 317-337
 - 23 See N C Bandyopadhyaya, *op cit*, see the important paper of B N S Yadava, 'Secular landgrants of the post-Gupta period and some aspects of the growth of feudal complex in north India', in D C Sircar, ed., *Land System and Feudalism in Ancient India*, University of Calcutta, 1966, 72-94. The general absence of the contractual element in the vast corpus of epigraphic material seems to be irrefutable, for contents of grants in general, of the writings of D C Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, Delhi, 1965, ch 5, *Political and Administrative System of Ancient and Medieval India*, Delhi, 1973, *Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as Revealed by Epigraphical Records*, Lucknow 1969 and *The Emperor and the Subordinate Rulers*, Santiniketan, 1982. Sircar's critique of 'feudal polity' is curious since he freely uses such terms as 'fiefs' and 'vassals' in the Indian context, see R S Sharma's criticism of Sircar's approach to the problem 'Indian Feudalism retouched', *The Indian Historical Review*, 12 (1974), 320-330. For me, however, the 'contractual' element remains important as otherwise the logic of service assignments does not appear intelligible. See also fn 26.
 - 24 See fn. 18 for references. A restatement of this will be available in R S Sharma, 'How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?' (mss, to be published in the *Journal of Peasant Studies*)
 - 25 Yadava, *Society and Culture*, ch 3
 - 26 R S Sharma, 'Landgrants to vassals and officials in Northern India C A D 1000-1200,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 4 (1961), 70-71, *idem*, 'Rajasasana meaning, scope and application' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 37th session, Calicut, 1976, 76-87. For other details of such grants known variously as *prasada-likhita*, *prasada-pattala*, *jivita*, *rakta-kodagi* and so on see N C Bandyopadhyaya, *op cit*, Yadava, 'Secular Landgrants', *loc cit*, *Society and Culture* ch 3, K. K. Gopal, 'Assignment to Officials and Royal Kinsmen in early medieval India (c 700-1200 A D)', *University of Allahabad Studies* (Ancient History Section), 1963-64, 75-103. Three points may, however, be noted i) the generally late chronology of such grants in some of which only the 'contract' element is explicitly stated, ii) they are, including *grasas* and *angabhogas* more an evidence of sharing of lineage patrimonial holding than of service grants, iii) in terms of total area controlled by dominant sections in a polity such grants may be found to constitute a relatively insignificant proportion
 - 27 This point has been raised by H Mukhia, *op cit*
 - 28 Recent attempts to 'construct' a crisis lean heavily on Brahmanical perception of the evils of Kaliyuga and on correlation of the evils with actual changes in terms of shifts in positions of *varnas* and producing classes, decline of urbanism, decentralization of polity and so on, see B. N S Yadava 'The Accounts of the Kali age and the social transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages', *The Indian Historical Review*, 5 1-2 (1979), 31-64, R S Sharma, 'The Kali Age A period of social crisis' in S N Mukherjee, ed., *op cit*, 186-203. The 'crisis', of course, is chronologically located several centuries after the Maurya period, but in any case, the historical roots of the 'crisis' are not clear
 - 29 See note 22; also the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta in D C Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, 1, 2nd edition, Calcutta University, 1965, 262-268
 - 30 The literature on the 'legitimation' process in early medieval India is grow-

ing, relevant discussions will be found in Romila Thapar, 'Social mobility in ancient India with special reference to elite groups' in her *Ancient Indian Social History some interpretations*, Delhi, 1978, B D Chattopadhyaya, 'Origin of the Rajputs: Political economic and social processes in early medieval Rajasthan', *The Indian Historical Review*, 31 (1976), 59-82, H Kulke, 'Early State Formation and Royal legitimation in Tribal areas of eastern India', *Studia Ethnologica Bernensia*, ed, R Moser & M K Gautam, 1 (1978), 29-37, idem, 'Legitimation and town planning in the feudatory states of central Orissa', *Cities in South Asia History, Society and Culture*, ed H Kulke, *et al*, Wiesbaden, 1982, 17-36, Royal temple policy and the structure of medieval Hindu Kingdoms' in A. Eschmann, *et al* ed, *The Cult of Jagannath and the regional tradition of Orissa*, Delhi, 1978, 125-138, Dirks, 'Political Authority' *loc cit*, G W Spencer, 'Religious networks and royal influence in eleventh century south India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 12 (1969), 32-56, S Jaiswal, 'Caste in the socio-economic framework of early India,' Presidential Address, Ancient India Section, Indian History Congress, 38th session, Bhubaneswar, 1977, 16ff, idem, 'Studies in Early Indian Social History Trends and Possibilities', *The Indian Historical Review*, 6 1-2 (1979-80), 1-63, J G De Casparis, 'Inscriptions and south Asian dynastic tradition' in R J. Moore, ed, *op cit*, 103-127. The discussions show that 'legitimation' could take various forms performance of ritual, including sacrificial ritual, genealogical sanctity and construction of temple networks The relationship between temporal authority and sacred domain of which the 'legitimation' process is a manifestation, is explored in A K. Coomaraswamy, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, American Oriental Society, 1942, , also L Dumont, "The conception of kingship in Ancient India", *Religion, Politics and History in India*, Mouton Publishers, 1970, ch 4 The following statement of Dumont is important 'while spiritually, absolutely, the priest is superior, he is at the same time, from a temporal or material point of view, subject and dependent' (65) J.F Richards (*Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, Introduction) claims that recent perspective " has revealed that too facile usage of only half recognized Western terms and concepts such as legitimation, and the Church-State dichotomy have obscured the complexity and true significance of Kingship in India," and Heesterman in his contribution ('The conundrum of King's authority', *ibid*, 1-27) initially agrees with this claim but finally concedes that "King and brahmin were definitely separated and made into two mutually exclusive categories The greater the King's power, the more he needs the brahmin", Cf also C R Lingat, *The Classical Law of India*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973, 216

- 31 See Cambay Stambhana Parsvanath temple inscription of 1308 A D referring to Alauddin as *suratrana*, Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica*, 19-23, no 664 An interesting record from Kotihar in Kashmir, dated 1369 A D , refers to Shihab-u-din as Shahabhadana and traces his descent from the Pandava lineage, B K Kaul Deambi, *Corpus of Sarada Inscriptions Of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1982, 113-118, the Veraval record of 1263 from Junagadh equates the prophet with Visvanatha—visvarupa and begins with his *prasasti* and refers to the Hjrera as *Srivisvanatha-pratibaddha-nau-jananam-badhaka-rasula-Muhammada samvat*, D C Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, 2, Delhi, 1983, 303
- 32 See Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, 2nd edition, Allahabad, 1968, 333-35 Mabbett, *op cit*, ch 8
- 33 For details see P V Kane, *History of Dharmasastra* (Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law), 3, 2nd edition, Poona, 1973, ch, 33; also

- Heesterman, 'The conundrum' *loc cit*
- 34 Heesterman, 'Power and Authority', *loc cit*
- 35 R.N Nandi, 'Origin and nature of Saivite Monasticism the case of Kalamukhas' in R S Sharma and V Jha, ed *Indian Society Historical Probing* (In memory of D D Kosambi), Delhi, 1974, 190-201, R Champakalakshmi, 'Religious conflict in the Tamil Country a re-appraisal of epigraphic evidence', *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, 5 (1978).
- 36 Bhakti could provide the delusion of equality among the lower orders which in reality remained beyond their access even in the ritual area, R.N Nandi convincingly points to the shift in the ideology of the Bhakti movement as also to the change brought about by its temple base and Sanskrit-educated priesthood, supported by members of ruling families, 'Some social aspects of the Nalayira Prabandham', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 37 session, Calicut, 1976, 111-123, Kesavan Veluthat, 'The temple base of the Bhakti movement in South India,' *ibid*, 40 session, Waltair, 1979, 185-194
- 37 Nandi, *op cit*, idem, *Religious Institutions and cults in the Deccan*, Delhi, 1973, 10ff, Veluthat, *op. cit*
- 38 K Veluthat, 'Royalty and Divinity Legitimation of Monarchical power in south', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 39 session, Hyderabad, 1979, 241-39, see also B Stein, *Peasant State*, 334ff.
- 39 H Kulke, 'Royal Temple policy.', *loc cit*, idem, 'King Anangabhtma III, the veritable founder of the Gajapati kingship and of the Jaganatha Trinity at Puri', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1 (1981), 26-39
- 40 For an interesting analysis of this process, H Kulke, 'Legitimation and Town-planning in the Feudatory States of Central Orissa', in *Ritual Space in India, Studies in Architectural Anthropology*, ed by Jan Pieper, offprint, 30-40
- 41 N Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, London, 1980, 12
- 42 Poulantzas further explains (*ibid.*, 37) 'ideological power is never exhausted by the State and its ideological apparatuses For just as they do not create the dominant ideology, they are not the only, or even primary factors in the reproductions of the relations of ideological domination/subordination The ideological apparatuses simply elaborate and inculcate the dominant ideology'
- 43 This view seems to be projected by both K Veluthat, 'Royalty and Divinity', *loc cit*, and P M Rajan Gurukkal who considers the Kulasekhara state of Kerala to be 'in a way the creation' of a dominant landed group among brahmanas, 'Medieval landrights Structure and Pattern of Distribution', *ibid*, 279-84
- 44 See footnotes 30 and 87
- 45 This requires to be underlined in view of the changing patterns of patronage in different periods For the early medieval period, the relative neglect of the implications of the deep penetration of Tantrism into religion and polity will bear out the point I am trying to make Devangana Dessai argues that the patronage of Tantrism is reflective of feudal degeneration, as it served the two dominant interests of the kings and feudal chiefs of early medieval India War and Sex, 'Art under Feudalism in India', *The Indian Historical Review*, 11 (1974), 12, also idem, *Exotic Sculpture of India*, Delhi 1975 This seems to be too narrow a view to take of the profound impact of Tantrism in early medieval society If Tantra represented esoteric knowledge, then the remark of F Edgerton, made in relation to the Upanisads, seems relevant here 'Knowledge, true esoteric knowledge, is the

- magical key to Omnipotence, absolute power. By it one becomes autonomous', 'Upanisads, what do they seek and why', in D P Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Studies in the History of Indian Philosophy*, 1, Calcutta, 1978, 136. For Tantric impact on Puranic as well as heterodox religious orders and its close association with temporal power, R N Nandi, *Religious Institution* David N Lorenzen, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas: two lost Saivite sects*, New Delhi, 1972, R B P Singh, *Jainism in early medieval Karnataka, (C A.D 500-1200)*, Delhi, 1975, B D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Rajasekhara, his court elites and their religion: a study of some aspects of the *Karpuramanjari*' (in press).
- 46 A K Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat* (A Survey of the history and culture of Gujarat from the middle of the tenth to the end of the thirteenth century), Bombay, 1956, 310, 315
 - 47 *Rajatarangini*, VII, 1146-48
 - 48 Heesterman, 'Power and Authority', *loc cit*
 - 49 De Casparis, 'Inscriptions and South Asian Dynastic tradition', *loc cit*
 - 50 Major Rock Edicts, II, XIII, see D C Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, 17, 35-36
 - 51 Ibid
 - 52 The concept is found in such texts as *Artaśāstra*, 6.2, *Kamandakiya Nitisara*, 8.45 and so on. See Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government*, 143ff, Altekar, *op. cit* 293ff., for recent comments, Heesterman, 'Power and Authority', *loc cit*, 77-78
 - 53 T R Trautmann, 'Tradition of Statecraft in Ancient India,' in R J Moore, ed., *op cit*, 86-102. Trautmann defines 'royal mystique' as 'a network of interrelated symbols' its vehicles being 'works of art such as courtly epics, royal biographies, and ornate ideologies found in inscriptions', he takes Rajendra Cola's expedition to the north and north-east as an expression of this 'mystique'
 - 54 Even R. Inden, who by no means suffers from the limitations of traditional political historiography, cannot seem to resist the search for a 'paramount king of all India', 'Hierarchies of Kings in early medieval India', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* N S., 15.1-2 (1981), 99.
 - 55 R S Sharma, *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, Delhi, 1983, ch 10
 - 56 For example, despite the substantial support extended to the Buddhist sects by both the Satavahanas and Western Ksatrapas, the dominance of *Varna* ideology is evident in their records, cf the expression *vinivattitacatuvana samkarasa* applied to Gautamiputra Satakarni in a *prasasti* written in his memory, and the expression *sarvva-varnairabhiṣamya-raksanartham patitve vrtena* applied to Saka Rudradaman I in the Junagadh inscription of A.D 150, Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, 177-204
 - 57 Despite their differences in many respects, N S Bose's model of 'tribal absorption', and M N Srinivas's model of 'Sanskritization' are being drawn upon to make this generalization. A useful review of the contributions of these two authors, with complete bibliographical references, will be found in S. Munshi, 'Tribal absorption and Sanskritization in Hindu Society', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, N S., 13.2 (1979), 293-317. It must be made clear that 'tribal absorption' is merely a broadly defined process and not the only process, and that the continuity of internal organization in a large measure does not imply status of equality within the social order, a misreading of the caste formation process would totally miss the hierarchical ordering in the caste structure down to the level of the untouchables. Secondly, the ethnic group as a whole, in view of the complex operation of the social mobility process, does not retain its pre-

- caste character, otherwise, we would not have had brahmanas, Ksatriyas, Sudras and so on emerging from the same stock. For useful discussion see Jaiswal, 'Studies in early Indian Social History', *loc cit*
- 58 Synoptic studies on processes of cult formation in early medieval India are not known to me but the excellent study on the cult of Jagannatha may help illuminate the process, A. Eschmann *et al.*, ed., *The Cult of Jagannath and the regional tradition of Orissa*, particularly, pt I, chs 3, 5, pt 2, chs. 13-14. In the case of Tamilnadu in the Cola period, note the remark of R. Champakalakshmi, "The early Chola temples systematically used the *linga* mainly due to its assimilative character as the only aniconic form which could incorporate in canonical temples, local and popular cult practices centring round the *Kangu* or pillar and tree, thus providing a constantly widening orbit for bringing in divergent socio-economic and ethnic groups into Saiva worship", 'Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India: A Review Article', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 18, 3-4 (1982), 420
- 59 De Casparis, *op cit.*
- 60 Dirks, 'Political Authority and Structural Change', *loc cit*
- 61 A. Guha, 'Tribalism to Feudalism in Assam, 1600-1750', *The Indian Historical Review*, 11 (1974), 65-76, Surajit Sinha, 'State Formation and Rajput myth in Tribal central India', *Man in India*, 42.1 (1962), 35-80; K. Suresh Singh, 'A Study in State-formation among Tribal communities', in R. S. Sharma and V. Jha, ed., *Indian Society: Historical Probings* 317-36, H. R. Sanyal, 'Malla-bhum' (manuscript)
- 61a 'Lineage' is here simply used to translate such terms as *kula*, *vamsa* or *anvaya* which were suffixed to the names of the ruling families, 'Lineage' in this sense does not denote prestate stage of polity as it may have done in the nascent stage of the emergence of State in early India (Romila Thapar, *From Lineage*).
- 61b The range of the definitions of State is enormous, and to view State as opposed to chiefdom in terms of the former's capacity to arrest fission in society and in terms of a 'centralized and hierarchically organized political system' (R. Cohen, 'State origins: A Reappraisal' in *The Early State*, 35-36) will not be compatible with long-term histories of state societies. Morton Fried's definition (*The Evolution of Political Society*, New York, 1967, 229) of State 'as a complex of institutions by means of which the power of the society is organized on a basis superior to kinship' also does not seem sufficient. The real question is the context of power. Since the basis of the State lies in separation between producing and non-producing groups, there is no incompatibility between state society and organization of political power along lineage ties or/and in other terms. State society, however, only points to the existence of this separation and does not suggest the historical specificity of the total complex of a State structure.
- 62 This estimate is based on H. C. Ray, *The Dynastic History of Northern India (Early Medieval Period)*, 2 vols., reprint, Delhi, 1973; F. Kielhorn, 'A List of Inscriptions of northern India', Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica*, 5, 1-96; D. R. Bhandarkar, 'A List of the inscriptions of northern India in Brahmi and its derivative scripts, from about 200 A.C.', Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica*, 19-23; F. Kielhorn, 'Synchronistic tables for southern India, A.D. 400-1400', *Epigraphia Indica* 8.
- 63 G. M. Moraes, *The Kadamba-Kula: A History of Ancient and Medieval Karnataka*, Bombay, 1931.
- 64 Dasarath Sharma, *op cit.*, also 2nd edition, Delhi, 1975.
- 65 P. Bhatia, *The Paramaras*, Delhi, 1968, also, H. V. Trivedi, *Inscriptions of the*

- Paramaras (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol 7 2)* New Delhi, n d
- 66 See M S. Krishnamurthy, *Nolambas: a Political and Cultural Study*, Mysore, 1980, D Desai, *The Mahamandalesvaras under the Calukyas of Kalyani*, Bombay, 1951, M S Govindaswamy, *The Role of Feudatories in Pallava History*, Annamalai University, 1965, idem, 'The Role of Feudatories in Cola History', Ph D thesis, Annamalai University, 1973, V Balambal, *Feudatories of South India*, Allahabad, 1978
 - 67 For the records of different Kalacuri lines see V V Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chediya (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol 4, 1-2)*, Ootacamund, 1955.
 - 68 For a recent discussion see D C Sircar, *Pala-Sena Yuger Vamsanucarita* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1982.
 - 69 The common origin of the Calukyas of Karnataka and the Caulukyas or Solankis of Gujarat has been doubted by many, including A K. Majumdar, but Majumdar himself points to the existence of common traditions among them, *op cit* 5, Rathod is derived from Rastrakuta, the name being in existence at Dhanop and Hathundi in Rajasthan in the early medieval period, D Sharma, ed, *Rajasthan through the ages 1*, Bikaner, 1966, 287, also Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*.
 - 70 De Casparis, *op.cit*
 - 71 Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*
 - 72 Perlín, *op cit*, 279.
 - 73 Yadava 'Society and Culture, 103, fn. 623, Chattopadhyaya, *op cit* , 63-64, an example of this is provided by Ajayagadh rock inscription in which Ananda, brother of Candella Trailokyavarman, is said to have reduced to submission the 'wild tribes of Bhillas Sabaras and Pulindas', *Epigraphia Indica*, 1, 337
 - 74 Apart from the cases of the Solankis and the Rathods those of Codagangas and Vengi Calukyas may be cited to illustrate this process
 - 75 Y Subbarayalu, 'Mandalam as a politico-geographical unit in south India', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 39 session, Hyderabad, 1978, 84-86 For details of the political geography of the Cola country see idem, *Political Geography of the Chola country*, Madras, 1973 Subbarayalu convincingly argues to show that *nadus* were basically agrarian regions and not 'artificial administrative divisions' (*Political Geography*, 32-33), but from the point of view of polity the important point is the correlation in many cases between 'chieftancies' and *nadus* and *padis* (*Political Geography* ch 7), see also Stein, *Peasant State* ch 3
 - 76 A.K. Majumdar, *op cit* , 17-22
 - 77 Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*
 - 78 See references in note 30
 - 79 J D M Derrett, *The Hoysalas (A Medieval Indian Royal Family)*, Oxford University Press, 1957, 7-8, S Settar, *Hoysala Sculptures in the National Museum, Copenhagen*, Copenhagen, 1975, 16
 - 80 Rajorgadh Inscription of Mathanadeva, *Epigraphia Indica*, 3, 263-267
 - 81 Duks, 'Political Authority and Structural Change', *loc. cit* , 130; Stein *Peasant State* , 188, for reference to Velirs of Kodumbalur as feudatories of the Pallavas, Govindaswamy, *The Role of Feudatories in Pallava History*, 70ff
 - 82 Kosambi writes, "The essential question is were the Damaras feudal lords? Did they hold land as feudal property? The answer is fairly clear, in the affirmative", 'Origins of Feudalism in Kashmir', *loc cit* , Yadava ('Secular landgrants', *loc cit* , 90) too refers to a merchant called Jayyaka who amassed wealth and became a Damara chief. These assertions seem to

result from a misleading of the *Rajatarangini* evidence. The reference relating to Jayyaka (VII 93-95) seems to show him to be from a peasant family, who traded in foodgrains with foreign countries and achieved Damara status (see also IV 347-48). The possible tribal background of the Damaras, their transformation into peasantry and emergence into a dominant section may have striking parallels with the Vellalas and other dominant peasant sections elsewhere, see the Appendix on Damaras in Krishna Mohan, *op cit*.

- 83 The concept of 'nuclear' regions or even 'sub-nuclear regions' has been used by historians working on this period. Kulke 'Royal Temple policy', *loc cit*, B Stein, 'Integration of the Agrarian System in south India' in R E Frykenberg, ed, *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, Madison, 1969, 175-216. Theoretical discussions will be found in R I Crane, ed, *Regions and Regionalism in South Asian Studies*, Duke University, 1966; J E Schwartzberg, 'The evolution of regional power configurations in the Indian subcontinent', in R G Fox, ed, *op. cit*, 197-233. I have, however, mainly followed the idea of the relative order of regions outlined in O H K Spate and A T A Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*, University Paperback, Delhi, 1972, chs 6, 13.
- 84 G Yazdani, ed, *Early History of the Deccan*, Oxford University Press, 1960, vol 2.
- 85 However, for irrigation and development of the agrarian base of the Caulukyan state structure, V K Jain, 'Trade and Traders in Western India (AD 1000-1300)', Ph D dissertation, Delhi University, 1981, ch 2, for Rajasthan, B D Chattopadhyaya, 'Irrigation in early medieval Rajasthan', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 16 2-3 (1973), 298-316.
- 86 D C Sircar, *Pala-Sena Yuger*.
- 87 This particular brand of criticism in respect of Indian polity has emanated, curiously, from American academic institutions, and in the context of early medieval polity been initiated by B Stein, 'The State and Agrarian order in medieval south India. A Historiographical Critique', in B Stein, ed *Essays on South India*, Delhi, 1976, 64-91. Stein proposed the alternative model of 'segmentary state' ('The segmentary state' *loc cit*.) which has proved a rallying point for South Asia experts from these institutions, even for initial detractors. For example, Dirks ('Political Authority and Structural Change', *loc cit*, 126) in 1976 declared 'The segmentary state model is neither well calibrated to index changes in political or social relations nor is it culturally sensitive enough to identify the differences between East Africa and India, or even more particularly between north and south India' (emphasis added, the implication perhaps is that the differences between north India and south India are greater than those between East Africa and India), by 1979 his criticism of the model had mellowed down considerably ('Structure and meaning of political relations' *loc cit*.) R. Inden considers the model a 'real break with previous approaches, 'Ritual, Authority, and cyclic time in Hindu Kingship', in J.F. Richards, ed, *op cit*, 28-73, see also B Stein, 'All the Kings' *Mana* Perspectives on Kingship in Medieval south India', *ibid*, 115-167, idem, 'Mahanavami: Medieval and modern Kingly ritual in south India' in B L Smith, ed, *Essays on Gupta Culture*, Delhi, 1983, 67-92. The real point of convergence in these writings is that they view the Indian State system, whatever be the period, as a ritual system.
- 88 The discussion here is restricted only to the construct of 'feudal polity' and to a particular brand of criticism it has been recently subjected to. It

does not take into account the total range of the critique of the feudal formation.

- 89 See note 9 for references to Southall's writings in which the 'segmentary state' model has been constructed. The applicability of the model has been debated in the volume edited by R. G. Fox, *op cit*, various points regarding the empirical validity of its application to the Cola State by Stein have been raised by R. Champakalakshmi, 'Peasant State and Society', *loc cit*, and in greater detail by D. N. Jha, 'Relevance of Peasant State and Society to Pallava and Cola times' (mss). I do not wish to re-examine the question of empirical validity here, but would briefly touch upon the internal consistency or the validity of the model itself. Southall constructs his model by drawing a distinction between 'segmentary state' and 'unitary state', which is, for a historian, as irrelevant as the dichotomy between 'early state' and 'industrial state'. If pre-state polity has a varied range (and according to Southall's own characterization, his East African Alur polity would approximate 'chiefdom' category), so too has State polity, and to equate State with 'unitary state' is to totally ignore historical experience. Curiously, Southall's 'segmentary state' and 'unitary state' are not ultimately distinctly separate categories either, they are two extreme points in the same structure, which change positions, depending on the degree of or centralization/decentralization in existence in the structure at any given point of time (260). Secondly, Southall posits 'segmentary state' as a counter-point to 'feudal polity' but ends up by suggesting its applicability to a series of historical political structures ranging from feudal France to 'traditional states of India, China and inner Asia' (252-254). There is no dearth of models one can draw upon (for example, the model of 'galactic' state constructed by Tambiah, *op cit*, on the basis of evidence from Thailand), and Stein is certainly not unaware of the curious position taken by Southall (Stein, 'Segmentary State', *loc cit*), but the point remains that the model is projected as a key to our understanding of polity in 'traditional' India. Is it that it is being rushed in to fill in the vacuum created by the decline of 'Oriental Despotism' or of the venerated tradition of East-West dichotomy?
- 90 Dirks, 'Political authority and Structural Change', *loc cit*.
- 91 Dirks, 'Structure and meaning of political relations', *loc cit*.
- 92 See Eisentadt, *op cit*, xv-xvi, 7-8.
- 93 Subbarayalu, 'Mandalam as a politico-geographical unit', *loc cit*.
- 94 The emergence of Cola power had its basis in the elimination of Muttarayar power in the Kaveri basin and then its penetration into *Tondaimandalam*. Kongudesa, Pandya country, Gangavadi, Vengi, to mention only a few regions, lay inside the orbit of the Cola political interests, irrespective of the duration and fluctuations in actual control, whereas on the fringes of the Cola region proper local lineages could continue, although Subbarayalu thinks that, the families of the 'Chiefs were enlisted for 'Chola army and administrative staff' (*Political Geography*, 80). For an attempt to determine the core of the Cola dominion through a study of the distribution pattern of Cola records see G. W. Spencer and K. R. Hall, 'Toward an analysis of dynastic hinterlands: The Imperial Cholas of 11th Century South India', *Asian Profile*, 2.1 (1974), 51-62.
- 95 I have already referred to the dispersed nodes of Mauryan State (note 50), in the case of the Kusanas too Gandhara in the north-west was a 'core' region and Mathura in the upper Ganga-Yamuna basin another (B. D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Mathura from Sunga to Kusana times: an historical outline', mss). 'Core', in the context of supra-local polities, has thus to

- acquire a flexible connotation
- 96 Stein, 'The State and Agrarian order', *loc cit*, the idea has been elaborated by G W Spence, 'The politics of plunder: The Cholas in eleventh Century Ceylon', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 33.3 (1976), 405-19 (Since I have not been able to consult Spencer's new publication, *Politics of Expansion: The Chola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya*, Madras, 1983, I can only state his formulations in the article cited here) Spencer's own evidence contradicts his conclusion since it shows that Cola expansion was motivated more by strategic-commercial considerations, particularly considerations, relating to the Pandya country, than by resource acquisition through raids. One may suggest that despite the revenue survey evidence of the time of the Colas and the actual occurrence of revenue terms (N Karasima & B Sitaraman, 'Revenue terms in Chola Inscriptions', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 5 (1972), 88-117, N Karashima, 'Land Revenue Assessment in Cola times as seen in the inscriptions of the Thanjavur and Gangaikonda-cholapuram temples', Cyclostyled copy) the revenue yield may have been limited, but the real issue is whether it was 'plunder' or agricultural surplus which sustained the ruling and non-ruling elites of society in 11th century India. The answer is, of course, obvious, and studies on both north and south suggest that revenue demand in the early medieval period was on the increase
 - 97 R.S Kennedy, 'The King in early south India, as Chieftain and Emperor', *The Indian Historical Review*, 3.1 (1976), 1-15
 - 98 A recent detailed study on this is K.R Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the age of the Colas*, Delhi, 1980, *idem*, 'International Trade and Foreign Diplomacy in early medieval south India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 21 (1978), 75-98. In fact, the phenomenon of the emergence of networks of exchange from 9th-10th centuries, which, in littoral regions, converged with those of international trade of that period was widespread, for Gujarat, V K Jain, *op cit*, for local centres of exchange coinciding with centres of ruling lineages in various parts of India, B.D Chattopadhyaya, 'Urban centres in early medieval India: an overview' (in press)
 - 99 Stein (*Peasant State*, ch 3) talks of local, autonomous chiefs in connection with the *nadu*, but his study of the Cola State has virtually no reference to the actual political linkage between them and the organization of Cola power. The report presented by N Karashima and Y Subbarayalu ('Statistical Study of personal names in Tamil Inscriptions: Interim Report II', *Computational Analysis of Asian and African Languages*, No 3, 1976, 9-20), on records from seven districts, lists more than 28 titles as 'Feudatory', refers to their association with administration and to distinctions between these titles, for details of different patterns of political and kin linkages, Balambal, *op cit*, Govindaswamy, 'The Role of Feudatories in Chola history'
 - 100 For details for north India, Yadava, *Society and Culture*, ch 3
 - 101 *Ibid*, also R S Sharma, *Social Changes in early medieval India* (circa A D 500-1200), Delhi 1969, a detailed study of the evidence has recently been made by R Inden, 'Hierarchies of Kings', *loc cit*
 - 102 See note 23
 - 103 Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta, Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, 1, 265. The expression is identical in meaning with *gihita-pratimuktasya* which occurs in Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsam* IV 33. And yet, it is from the 5th-6th century that the term *samanta* comes to denote subordinate position in relation to an overlord, L Gopal, *Samanta*—its varying significance in

- ancient India', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1963, 21-37
- 104 Derrett, *op cit*, 177
- 105 A detailed examination of this will prove that the basic mechanism of the growth of overlord—feudatory axis was not through assignment of land and transfer of state power. The Pratiharas, for example, in the process of their emergence as a supra—regional power received support from Calukyas of Gujarat, Cahamanas and other minor Pratihara lineages, see *Epigraphia Indica*, 9, 107-9, *ibid*, 18, 87-99, the reference to the *samastata-vika-samantacakra* in the *Ramacarita* will also hardly fit the suggestion that the *samantas* were basically created, K K Gopal, 'The assembly of the samantas in early medieval India', *Journal of Indian History*, 42 (1964), 231-50. For similar evidence regarding Pallava and Cola polities, Dirks, 'Political Authority', *loc cit*, Stein, 'All the king's Mana', *loc cit*; Govindaswamy and Balambal (works cited above)
- 106 cf references in the records of Rastrakuta Krsna III to the distribution of conquered dominions among his subordinates, *Epigraphia Indica*, 4, 285, *ibid*, 5, 35, for reference to award, in the Cola period, of chiefship for the suppression of *raja-drohis*, *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, 1913, 40
- 107 Sharma (*Social changes*) too uses the term 'feudal ranks' but not in the sense of a system which emerges in the context of interdependent polities. Ranking is suggested by the pairing or other forms of combination of *samanta/mahasamanta* with designations which are basically administrative in connotation. For details, Yadava, *Society and Culture* ch 3, although Yadava does not view the evidence from the position that I would like to take, also L Gopal, *op cit*, for the south, Karashima and Subbarayalu 'Statistical study', *loc cit*, D Desai, *Mahamandalesvaras*, Balambal, *op cit* Govindaswamy, *op cit*
- 108 cf the interesting case of great queen Bammaladevi being addressed as *mahamandalesvari* in a record of 1179, *Epigraphia Carnatica*, 12, Tm 35, for evidence from Rajasthan, Chattopadhyaya, 'Origin of the Rajputs', *loc cit*
- 109 Sulapani, who was head of *Vaiendraka-silpi-gosthi* (guild of *sutradharas* of north Bengal) is mentioned as *ranaka* in *Deopara prasasti* of 12th century, Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, 2, 121, a record of 1263 from Jalor refers to the 'head-worshipper' of a Mahavira temple as *Bhattaraka Ravala*, Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica*, 19-23, no 563
- 110 K P Ammakutty, 'Origin of the Samanta caste in Kerala', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 41 session, Bombay, 1980, 86-92. In Bengal and Orissa *samanta*, *mahapatra*, *pattanayaka* and so on are related to caste position
- 111 R Inden, 'Hierarchies of Kings', *loc cit*
- 112 For example, a record of 1151 from Tumkur district, *Epigraphia Carantica*, 12, Tm 9 the range is between *Pancamahasabda mahasamanta* and *nayaka*
- 113 Cf the article by D Shukla, 'The trend of demotion of feudal families in the early medieval Indian Complex', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 41 session, Bombay, 1980, 177-183
- 114 Derrett, *op cit* 179
- 115 For examples of big merchants and merchant families being elevated to the ranks of *danda-pati*, *dandadhipati* and even *nrpati* with appropriate insignias, V K Jain, *op cit*, 323 ff
- 116 H Kulke ('Fragmentation and Segmentation Versus Integration Reflections on the concepts of Indian Feudalism and the Segmentary State in

Indian history', to be published shortly in *Studies in History*) also speaks of integration at the regional level but generally avoids discussing the political mechanism of integration

- 117 I Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Asia Publishing House, 1963, ch 5, idem, 'The Peasant in Indian History', General President's Address, Indian History Congress, 43 session, Kurukshetra, 1982, S Nural Hasan, 'Zamindars under the Mughals' in R E Frykenberg, ed., *op cit*, 17-32, also A R. Khan, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the reign of Akbar*, Simla, 1977, Introduction

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The National Question in Kashmir

UNDERSTOOD as a social conflict between competing groups, strata, and leaders of various classes to establish their hegemony over a movement and the people, factionalism emerged as a significant phenomenon in the freedom movement of Jammu and Kashmir. During the various phases of the freedom struggle in the 1931-47 period, the nationalists faced serious threats from the forces of communalism having strong feudal ties. This period of the national liberation movement saw four distinct phases of factional polarization, as a result of which the national movement advanced from one crisis to the other, but carried with it the imprint of the past as its inherent legacy. There was a consequential change also in the orientation, content and structure of the movement. This continuity and change marks the progressive march of the national movement in Kashmir.

During the initial phase of the 1931-35 struggle the ideological character of factionalism was highly amorphous, largely due to the use of religion as the main instrument of ideological warfare by both the factions. Despite this, an attempt has been made to demarcate the basic differences in the content and form of the ideologies they represented. The conflict in this period was mainly between the forces of Islamic medievalism led by Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammed Yusaf Shah and the religious forces of popular protest and modernism led by Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah. Although the movement led by Sheikh Abdullah itself used the populist mumbo-jumbo of Islam, it was, at the same time, an expression of real distress and of protest against this real distress. The canonized Islamic fundamentalism of Mirwaiz Maulvi Yusaf Shah received covert and overt support from all possible feudal quarters from the Maharaja, the Hindu communalists, the landlords, and the centres of Islamic orthodoxy. On the other hand, Sheikh Abdullah relied on the support of the educated and ordinary Muslim populace.

The use of religion as the ideological raw material in the politico-ideological warfare between the two camps, was necessitated not only by the overwhelmingly backward nature of the social formation of Kashmir but also by nature of the class leadership of both factions, the feudal class

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and the petty-bourgeoisie, both of whom shared the same idiom for different ends. In this warfare between the dominant classes of feudalism and subordinate classes of anti-feudal struggle (educated youth and general masses) the mass-mobilization was therefore carried out through Quoranic discourse. The issue became who knows the basics of Islam and how much. For instance, while challenging his political adversaries (Sheikh Abdullah in particular) and claiming to be the only high priest of Islamic orthodoxy, Mirwaiz Maulvi Yusaf Shah announced on 11 September 1931. "Those who do not follow the canons of Islam will never progress. Those who do not know the different aspects and the meanings of Arabic language can interpret the Quoran only wrongly" ¹ In interpreting economics and politics, the objective of the fundamentalists was to maintain *status quo* by giving the popular slogan of 'Islam in danger' against the people themselves ² On the other hand the vanguard of the subaltern classes—the petty bourgeois Reading Room Party³ in particular—tried to discover in the so-called 'true-Islam' an instrument of social change which went against Islamic orthodoxy itself. Consequently the Sheikh declared Mirwaiz Maulvi Yusaf Shah as the enemy of Islam because he was "sucking the blood of poor people" ⁴ The leadership of both the dominant and subordinate classes (of Muslims), thus resorted to Islamic slogans in different ways to maintain and abolish specific power blocks in the economy and politics of the state.

The 1931-35 period of hostility between the two factions, which resulted in numerous conflicts, drew the masses into the controversy in large numbers and led to their politicization. This conflict between Muslim feudal interests and anti-feudal masses was personified in the clash of the 'Sher' (lion, a nickname for Sheikh Abdullah after his valiant revolt against the rule of Maharaja) and the 'Bakra' (goat, a nickname for Mirwaiz Yusaf Shah, after the shape of his beard).

In the 1935-39, period, soon after overcoming the communal pulls and pressures of the Muslim League, the national movement in Kashmir inclined towards the ideological positions of the Congress. In this respect the change in the name of the platform of freedom struggle in Kashmir, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC), into All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (AJKNC) should be regarded as a symbolic advance of the secular nationalist forces in the state and a stage in the radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie.

In the third phase of 1939-44, a major controversy developed within the national movement in Kashmir between the radicals influenced by the Congress left-wing as well as the CPI and the rightists under the influence of Gandhi and the Congress right wing, on the nature of the 'Naya Kashmir Programme', and on questions like people's war, and relations with the Soviet Union in its fight against fascism.

The last phase of 1945-47, was influenced by the movement for Pakistan (led by the Muslim League), followed by the wave of communal holocaust in India. The freedom struggle during this period took the form

of the 'Quit Kashmir' movement against the Maharaja—to rehabilitate the waning hegemony of secular nationalist forces under the leadership of the AJKNC

Consequently, for the leadership of the National Conference, the accession of Kashmir to India became inevitable, because the objective of the movement was the capture of political power after independence. Moreover, it was clear to the nationalists of Kashmir that they would never acquire power in the bureaucratized and militaristic politico-economic structure of Islamic Pakistan. This had become evident from the experience of the North West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.), where the esteemed Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was virtually confined either to various jails or to house arrest (which continues to date), despite his rallying of almost total popular support in that province.⁵ Thus, instead of the theocracy of Pakistan where the landlords and the bureaucrats enjoyed full share of the spoils of the Pakistan movement, in alliance with the army,⁶ the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir opted for the Indian form of democracy (where the capitalist class under the leadership of big bourgeoisie had succeeded in exercising its decisive say in the Indian state in alliance with landlords to form a powerful ruling-bloc,⁷ with an assurance of autonomy and special status, article 370 of the Indian constitution), so that in the implementation of bourgeois democratic reforms and especially the land-reforms in Jammu and Kashmir,⁸ the Indian legal apparatus would not become an obvious structural fetter like in the rest of India. The paradox to be noted however, is that this autonomy was itself the result of a necessary break with Islamic orthodoxy and identification with the All-India national movement.

The National Question in Kashmir

In the period 1931-47, the nationalist movement in Kashmir advanced despite the attempts of militant Hindu and Muslim communal forces in alliance with the feudal autocracy of the Dogra Maharaja. While the nationalist forces in Kashmir reacted sharply to the partition of India on a religious basis, this did not automatically close the chapter on 'Kashmir problem' and the national-regional and the cultural aspirations of the Kashmiris. In fact, it reflected the emergence of national awareness among Kashmiris which was above sectarian considerations, that is, the recognition of nationality or a regional consciousness by the people in terms of a regionalized community of culture irrespective of caste, creed, sex or religion etc.

The national aspirations of the Kashmiri people could not be crystalized into a national revolt of a regionalized community of culture for a long period of time. The reason for this was the existence of an extreme form of feudal exploitation by the Dogras, who had bought Kashmir from the British and ruled it with the backing of imperialism. This despotic regime blocked any progress of regional-national art-

literature and other manifestations of folk culture. Feudalism also served as a fetter on any socio-economic advance of the people for over a hundred years. Only after being put into the melting pot of colonial exploitation, when there arose a national upsurge in the Indian sub-continent, Kashmir, like other "native States" of India, was also infected by it in the beginning of the twentieth century.

The emergence of a mass movement for national independence under the leadership of the Congress in India, the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation struggles, the press in Punjab which projected the problem of Kashmir in India, were, a few of the key factors which had, objectively and subjectively, a cumulative effect in building up a major national upsurge of the Kashmiris (especially Muslims) from 1931 onwards. But the effects were neither immediate nor very direct.

The necessity of freedom and its philosophy had taken strong roots in the minds of the rising bourgeois and petit-bourgeois (educated) sections of the population. For instance, activists of the Young Men's Muslim Association, like Mohij Ud-din Karra and Mohammed Yusuf Shah Quraishi, warned the British government and its puppet, the Dogra Maharaja, that in case their demands were not conceded they would start a rebellion "similar to the French Revolution in Kashmir" ⁹

Thus, even a decade and a half after the Bolshevik Revolution the nationalists in Kashmir were looking to 1789. Even this archaic expression of discontent was seen as an unhealthy phenomenon by the Maharaja and the British alike. More than his British patrons, the Maharaja tried to censor the philosophy of Indian national movement, lest it should capture the minds of people in Jammu and Kashmir. A teacher in Jammu college, Sant Singh, was dismissed from his service and externed from the state for one year for "collecting subscriptions for the *Punjabee*" ¹⁰ Moreover, the Dogra monarch had declared the chanting of 'Bande Matram' and other nationalist slogans as a treason to the Raj and to himself. Those who were influenced by the nationalist zeal of the freedom movement in India were regarded as "agitators of a politically dangerous movement" ¹¹ In addition to close surveillance of the nationalists in the state, strong measures were adopted to stop the spectre of Bolshevism from entering the state even in the form of literature ¹² The communists were declared the arch enemy of colonialism in India and feudalism in the state. ¹³ Even the Russian currency was confiscated from certain traders in Kashmir, ¹⁴ lest it invite the ghost of Bolshevism. Thus we can see that the oppressors, both Indian and British, were always aware of the possibility of piecemeal discontent taking on an all-India anti-imperialist character and sought to isolate, buy up and crush all dissent.

Fetters of Communalism and Casteism

The regime of the Maharaja had an overtly communal and casteist character. The structure and policy of the reinforced apparatus of Dogra absolutism discriminated against the Kashmiris, and in particular, the

plebian Muslim masses of the valley, who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the state. The lack of an organized movement till 1930-31 helped the state machine to coerce, break and oppress the subordinate classes. The major components of this punitive state machinery were chiefly Punjabis or the "Dogra Rajputs of mediocre abilities" ¹⁵

The absolute backwardness of the Muslims was the product of the communal policy of the Maharaja to keep them out of power and patronage. Even the Kashmiri Pandits were victims of Dogra racism and casteism in the initial period because more than 60 per cent of gazetted posts went to Dogras, especially Rajputs, ¹⁶ despite their (the Dogras') inferior educational qualifications.

The Maharaja regarded the Kashmiris as a race of slaves. He did not provide them with equal opportunities in trade, industry, education, jobs, agriculture and above all for their upliftment as a community of culture. In fact, he discouraged the evolution of a regionalized community of culture in Kashmir. The Muslims of the state, thus, became the worst sufferers from the triple dictum of racism, communalism and casteism. This was inherent in the legal philosophy of juridical structure under the Maharaja. For example the casteist philosophy of jurisprudence laid down that everyone except a Dogra Mian could be hanged for a murder ¹⁷

The communalization of the feudal structure was the basis of Dogra Hindu rule, which hampered the economic development as well as the national awareness of the Kashmiris. The Hindus from outside were given opportunities to establish business, trade and industry on far more favourable terms than those offered to the Muslims of the Valley ¹⁸

The communal nature of the feudal economy was evident in the fact that out of 25 *jagirs* that were granted during the first five years of Maharaja Hari Singh, only two went to the majority community of Muslims. Such a discriminatory policy hampered the growth of a regional bourgeoisie and the development of capitalism in the state. In fact, feudal fetters retarded industrial development to such an extent that a noted representative of the Indian capitalist class, Jammalal Bajaj complained that the "cottage industry in the villages of Kashmir was not valued by the Government" ¹⁹ This obviously had an effect on the political expression of dissent when it occurred.

These feudal policies of the Maharaja set the stage for the 1931 upsurge. The issues of Fazlud²⁰ and Abdul Qadir²¹ were the product of the three-pronged communal, casteist and racist policy. The revolt against such an obnoxious regime cannot, therefore be branded as an outright Muslim communalism. In fact, it was a revolt against the feudal fetters. The actual content of the movement was national democratic. It is true that in this people's upsurge the democratic urge of the masses was also mixed up with religious bigotry. Yet this protest helped the growth of a regionalized community of culture in Kashmir. Thus, during the following years of freedom struggle the Islamic shell of leadership and ideology (as represented by Mirwaiz Maulana Yusuf Shah) was overthrown, and the

rational kernel of the national movement was retained. This was the outcome of a decisive struggle between nationalism and communalism with nationalism emerging victorious. For example, the national democratic nature of the 1931 upsurge was explained by one of its protagonists as "a war of the oppressed against the oppressor. Its aim is nothing more or less than to seek justice and redress. If the ruler was Muslim and his subjects the Hindus, the war would have been fought on similar grounds"²² It was not unexpected that the Maharaja's presentation of the events of 1931 succeeded in alarming the communalist sections of India. Thus they found in the instinctive bigotry of the 1931 rebellion a danger to Kashmir. But whose instinctive bigotry was more dangerous—Fazldad's and Abdul Quadir's or the Maharaja's? The Hindu vested interests had a stake in the communal structure of Dogra Raj no less than British imperialism with its policy of divide and rule. The plebian masses stood on the other side of the barricade. Those who certified the plebians of the upsurge as the most bigoted and turbulent community have, however, nothing to say about the racism, communalism and casteism of the Hindu Maharaja. Yet in the name of Indian nationalism defined as 'Hindu Rastra' a resolution was passed by the Hindu Mahasabha in its Akola session of 15th August 1931 which stated "The Hindu Mahasabha looks upon with fear at the fiery propaganda carried on against the Maharaja of Kashmir"²³

Inside Kashmir similar petty bourgeois elements among Kashmiri Pandits adopted a narrow communal and opportunist posture. They demanded job security for themselves (like that accorded to Anglo-Indians). This narrow sectionalism was condemned by the Congress leaders of India like Tej Bahadur Sapru as "unsound in principle"²⁴. The identification of the Kashmiri Pandits with the Dogra regime was evident in the following words of Kashyap Bandhu. "By virtue of their religious similarity, common interest and deep and abiding sense of loyalty, Kashmiri Pandits are identical with the government"²⁵. In order to win over the Maharaja and the British masters, they even alleged a communist hand in the revolt of 1931. Their deputation to the Maharaja on 30 October 1931 claimed: "We have cogent reasons to believe that communist agents have a strong hand in the agitation"²⁶. The spectre of communism was raised when the strategy of Hindu alarm did not work with the British officials.

The unity of feudal vested interests belonging to both Hindu and Muslim communities becomes evident with the progress and maturity of the national movement. Various landlords like Nazir Hussain, Jagirdar Raja Villayat Khan, Akram Khan, etc. openly aligned with the Maharaja against the national movement led by Sheikh Abdullah²⁷. Mirwaiz Maulvi Yusuf Shah also joined this alliance at the end of 1932.

Thus, there emerged, by the end of 1932, a broad unity, in theory and practice, of all feudal interests in the state to work against the freedom struggle from their respective angles. The nationalist leaders now faced a situation where they were surrounded by various hostile forces. These forces tried to isolate and harass the nationalist agitators. Facing them

all at once Sheikh Abdullah said "I do not know how many Hari Singhs there are in Kashmir to rule over us. One Hari Singh is the Maharaja Second is the Hindus, third is Mirwaiz Moulvi Yusuf Shah and his party."²⁸

Criticizing the Hindu reaction to the movement, Sheikh Abdullah exclaimed that, "The Muslims have committed a great sin in thinking that they are human beings. Had they continued to regard themselves as dumbdriven cattle as in the past their relation with Hindus would have automatically become friendly."²⁹ Thus, while the language used is that of religion, and it has its social limitation, the anti-feudal drive behind the movement cannot be overlooked.

The Process of Nationality Formation

The growth of the national consciousness in Jammu and Kashmir took place in the background of the above social conditions. Here, the Muslims of the Kashmir Valley being the first target of feudal exploitation, they also naturally happened to be the first to raise the banner of national revolt in the years 1930-31. The objective nature of the movement helped the growth of the regionalized community of culture in Kashmir. The democratic and nationalist spirit of this struggle was recognized by various national leaders of India, including Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru. Maulana Azad criticized the attitude of British imperialists and the Hindu press for trying to interpret and project the movement as a "result of the dispute between the Hindus and the Muslims."³⁰ The feudal and communal strategy of fanning communal tension in Kashmir was also recognized by Kotovsky when he said that, "the absolute power of the prince and the arbitrary rule of the Dogra feudal lords were encouraged by the British colonial regime represented there by the British Resident the British brought troops into Kashmir (when uprisings broke out in the summer of 1931) and succeeded in provoking clashes between the Hindus and Moslems."³¹

After being put into the melting pot of the colonial-feudal regime, the diverse ethnic elements of Jammu and Kashmir came closer to forming a national basis for their freedom struggle. There started a bourgeois class formation, transcending the barriers of caste, religion, tribe etc. This also led to the evolution of a dual consciousness (existing side by side), one of which was the pan-Indian consciousness, and the other a regional consciousness.

The history and culture of Jammu and Kashmir were part of the pan-Indian civilization. This homogeneity of Indian civilization is explained by Irfan Habib: "There is no doubt that there has been a consciousness of India as a country through the centuries. Partly, this is due to geography, the Himalayas and the western and eastern ranges separating it from rest of the world. Partly, the Brahmanical culture, with Sanskrit as the lingua franca, has given it a unity in the eyes of the upper strata of society. Fourteenth century poets like Amir Khusrau and

Isami sang of the glories of Hindustan, of its riches, its beauty and culture Their description leaves us in no doubt that by Hindustan they meant the entire sub-continent of India³²

Whereas in ancient Kashmir Brahmanical culture and Sanskrit played a unifying role, after the spread of Islamic culture in Kashmir (and the rest of India) this role was played by Persian and Hindustani (Hindi and Urdu) In fact, "the position of Urdu was preeminent as the recognized official language of several regions from Kashmir to Hyderabad and from Bihar to Baluchistan."³³ Indeed, Urdu undermined the growth and the position of native languages of the state (like Kashmiri and Dogri) Economically, the great Indian nationalism was rooted in the calculation of advantages accruing from an all-India market for rapid capitalist development Thus, the linguistic-cultural development in modern India helped the growth of pan-Indian nationalist consciousness in Jammu and Kashmir during the period of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle

However, the links with pan-Indian nationalism did not prevent the emergence of an inherent regional consciousness in Kashmir, indeed, the latter contributed to the former as it was anti-Maharaja and anti-colonial in content Local nationalism was the product of territorial homogeneity, the folk-cultural specificities, the common heritage of Kashmiri civilization and its linguistic identity, uniformity of artistic, literary and aesthetic tradition, and similarity in ethical-psychological make-up as well as in dress, food habits etc based on climatic-geographical conditions and socio-cultural mores evolved so far The Kashmiris, whether Hindus or Muslims, thus, vitally differ in some respects from their counterparts in the sub-continent It is this regional consciousness and the quest for its survival and growth which gave rise to subsequent demands for special status, and at times even chauvinist slogan of sons of the soil was raised to prevent the swamping of the Kashmiri identity by a massive inflow of people from the Hindu-Hindi mainland The point to note is that this identity developed more clearly in the process of the overthrow of Dogra rule, which was part and parcel of the struggle of other linguistic nationalities to overthrow British rule Thus, the Kashmiri identity develops within the framework of Indian unity against imperialism and not in opposition to it The forces which threatened Indian unity were, in fact, the protagonists of the 'Two Nation' theory

It should also be noted that the national movement in Kashmir forged ahead amidst the communal Hindu and Muslim backlash The Hindu vested interests in the state and the Muslim League in India were opposed to the secular nationalist forces In its initial phase only a few leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Gaffar Khan, K M Ashraf and the leadership of the Communist Party of India came forward in solidarity with the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle in Kashmir However, from the very beginning, the movement in Kashmir was carried forward in a more or less autonomous and a relatively independent form

This characteristic of the Kashmir movement also helped in the emergence of a specific popular consciousness in the minds of the people, which was in many ways different from the dominant form of national consciousness in India, especially in respect of the anti-feudal struggle

The autonomous pattern and the crystallization of the Kashmiri community of culture helped the growth of a distinct 'little nationalism' (to be explained later) in Kashmir. In the initial period of this struggle almost every section of the Muslim community plunged into the movement. It also included the feudal sections of the Muslim community like the *zamindars*, landlords, officials and *mullahs* alongside the plebians. All of them joined the struggle because each and every component of the Muslim community in Kashmir was in some form a victim of the Maharaja's racist and communal policy. In this period, therefore, the major demands of the movement included the redressal of the grievances of Muslim *zamindars* and officials, in addition to the introduction of democratic institutions in the state. However, when the struggle against feudalism took a militant form, the feudal components either withdrew from it out of alarm and panic, or were purged. The purging of the feudal elements and the consolidation of the nationalist forces, in their turn, necessitated a radical restructuring of the socio-economic perspective as well as the platform of the movement.

In this anti-feudal movement a broad section of peasants and artisans came out to fight in the streets. Their response was spontaneous. In the 1931 upsurge, the plebian masses (of artisans, traders and peasants) laid siege to the capital of Srinagar. For the first time, the national aspirations of the Kashmiris were awakened during this popular uprising. This insurgency also threw up a new leadership for the movement in the form of petty bourgeois intelligentsia, who played a crucial role in the linguistic and cultural awareness of the Kashmiri community. They were also primarily instrumental in the crystallization of the anti-feudal upsurge into a nationalist unrest under the influence and with the support of the Indian national movement led by the bourgeoisie. They did this by handing down to the common people the distinct heritage of Kashmiri literary and cultural pride. The social significance of the emergent bourgeois elite lay not only in the interpretation it provided of the Kashmiri past and present or the contribution made to the literary and cultural traditions, but, above all in the fact that it made this knowledge a part of a wider popular consciousness. The spread of nationalist consciousness in this way ultimately helped in the emergence of a composite Kashmiri culture without any emphasis on Muslim sectarianism. Thus, by 1939, every conscious member of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh community joined the national movement.

The leadership of the movement represented the traders, the owners of small-scale enterprises, the petty bourgeois educated elite, the artisans and the peasants. They set up a small cell known as 'Reading Room Party' to carry out political agitation. They demanded an end to discrimi-

nation on religious and ethnic ground and the introduction of bourgeois democratic reforms. Within two or three years (after 1931) this leadership of the movement was able to purge the landlords, *mullahs*, and Ahmediyas (a pro-British force) from it. By the years 1935-36, there arose a need for a protracted struggle for independence. The success of the struggle lay in the participation of every nationalist in the state. Therefore, the doors of the nationalist platform were thrown open for everyone by transforming the AJKMC into AJKNC.

From this time onwards, leading Hindu business men from Jammu also started raising their voice against the feudal policy of the Maharaja, and for the need for bourgeois democracy. Lala Girdharilal, for example, wrote "The economic evil is spread all over the state. It is clouding the people with untold miseries. The trade and industry are extinct. Business is sacrificed at the altar of the market slump. The condition of the peasantry is appalling. But the ruler is anxious to fill his coffers for meeting his own expenses. The state goes on increasing the burden of taxes on the people—the greatest need of the time is to lay a strong foundation of a society that will represent all the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh subjects of the state alike and in which all will be rid of the evils which attend the government's policy of divide and rule."³⁴

Impact of the Labour Movement

The distinctive character of this movement depends on the role of yet another class. In the annals of the history of Kashmir there are numerous examples of the solidarity of workers in their struggle against the exploiters. The *shawl* workers' strike in 1865 and the silk factory workers' revolt in 1924 clearly bring out the solidarity of labouring masses against the economic and political oppressors. In fact, one distinguished observer of Kashmir's national movement regarded the revolt of silk factory workers in 1924 as a "dress rehearsal for the events of 1931-34"³⁵

The decisive influence of labour ideology in the freedom struggle came through the organization of the trade union movement. The initiative in this direction was taken by the Communist Party of India (CPI), whose activists were working within the National Conference. The task of mobilizing the toiling masses was initiated by BPL Bedi and Mrs Freda Bedi. They were supported in this work by Dhanwantri, GM Sadiq, GM Karra, Faiz Ahmad Paracha, GM Bakshi, Sardar Budh Singh, Mistry Siraj-Ud-Din, Lala Ram Chand etc. With the efforts of these leaders the Mazdoor Sabha was organized in the Valley. This was followed by the emergence of various other unions of drivers, carpet weavers, *tonga* drivers, the silk factory workers etc all under the banner of Mazdoor Sabha. This increasing strength of the Mazdoor Sabha gave a new impetus to the secular nationalist movement, because it had no concern with religion. During the strike movement the leaders of Mazdoor Sabha educated the workers about the objective and meaning of

the national liberation movement.

They inculcated in workers a secular nationalist consciousness and the need to privatize religious philosophy. They also warned the workers about the dangers of religious chauvinism. In the rallies organized by Mazdoor Sabha, the workers carried red flags and placards saying that the slavery of toilers did not profess any religion. The national movement during this period came very close to professing the need for scientific socialism. Sheikh Abdullah at times even emphasized the need for an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. For example he said "The labourers, both Hindus and Muslims, equally become the prey to the capitalists. The labouring classes in Kashmir made more sacrifices during the last six years of our freedom movement, but they did not gain anything out of it. It is a matter of shame for the educated young Muslims who secured government jobs, as a result of the freedom movement, that they do not have any regards for these poor Muslims. The peasants and the labourers fill the state treasury with their blood and sweat and the money is spent by others. Unemployed Hindus are similarly crushed under the clutches of the capitalists of their own community. This state of affairs will, however, die one day. Now the time is fast approaching when a united front of all labourers and peasants will be organized. We must, therefore, render every possible help to the Mazdoor Sabha and its leaders."³⁶

This stand of Sheikh Abdullah was certainly a great philosophical advance over the national movement so far. This nationalist vision went far beyond the confines of Gandhism, philosophy of the Indian National Congress. In fact, during this phase, the whole terminology of mass mobilization changed radically. The influence of CPI and Marxist philosophy on the labour movement in Kashmir, not only enhanced the power, prestige and the popular base of the edifice of the National Conference, but they also transformed the ideological character, the demands, the slogans, the organizational appeal as well as the structure of the national movement. "Now it was no more a practice to recite Quran, Dr Iqbal's poems, Gita and Granth Saheb. Now for the first time, people understood their rights, demands, and slogans. It was no more a fetish of out-dated religious dogmas. The new influence was rooted in the analysis of the concrete life of the people, which they were living in their day-to-day toil for survival,"³⁷ recalled Pir Abdul Ahad.

In the 1940's the nationalist movement came under the telling spell of Marxism. KM Ashraf, who visited the Valley in order to win the cadre for the nationalist movement of the Indian subcontinent, was happy at this development. In 1942, NN Raina (who came under the influence of Marxism in Allahabad University) returned to his native land for political work. He became an influential member of the left-wing in the National Conference. The communist activists also "opened a study circle at Dal Gate to propagate the philosophy of Marxism and commu-

nism”³⁸ By the end of 1942, the CPI was able to open “an organizing committee, of which Miss Mehmooda, GM Sadiq and GB Bakshi were members”³⁹ Thus, by 1943, there had emerged a big group of CPI progressives in the National Conference who were able to influence its future strategy of struggle in a decisive manner. They included chiefly the workers and peasant leaders, intellectuals, and political workers of the National Conference

It was in the background of such political changes that the toilers formed one of the strongest detachments of the National Conference in the years 1940-50 Their impact was obvious in the Mirpur session of the National Conference in 1942 when it passed the resolutions sending greetings to the Red Army and expressing its solidarity in the heroic fight against fascism They provided the authorship to the *Naya Kashmir* manifesto of the National Conference. It was a charter for socio-economic independence This document was discussed at various levels for a long period of time Non-communists supported it only on paper, like their Congress counterparts did about the land reform resolutions etc in India Non-communists did not believe that ‘land to the tiller’ slogan or land reforms could be implemented In fact, the anti-left section of the National Conference “never took it as a practical solution. For them it was a mere demagogic trick to woo people Some Hindu leaders like Kashyap Bandhu were definitely alarmed by all this”⁴⁰

In the formulation of *Naya Kashmir*, the experiences of the Soviet Union were the main inspiration Sheikh Abdullah, for example, wrote in its introduction “In our times Soviet Russia had demonstrated before our eyes not merely theoretically but in her actual day-to-day life and development that real freedom takes birth only from economic emancipation.”⁴¹ The *Naya Kashmir* manifesto clearly spelled out in most unambiguous terms the ‘Peasant Charter’, ‘Workers Charter’, and ‘Women Charter’ etc “No sector of national movement in this sub-continent, conceived of anything like this document The Fundamental Rights resolution of Karachi session of the Indian National Congress, or even the Lucknow and Faizapur sessions respectively in 1936 and 1937, are miles behind in their democratic content from the point of view of common people”⁴² It is only in this context that the sweeping land reforms between 1947-50 can be understood Without this asset of the National Conference the events of the 1946-48, days of ‘Quit Kashmir’ movement, and accession to India would be unthinkable

The emergence of labour movement as distinct political bastion of the struggle for freedom, thus, changed the basic philosophy and the character of the movement. This change was taken note of by everybody in those days. The editor of the *Ranbu* weekly, for example, says : “The processionists carried red-flags and banners in their hands, shouting slogans as a mark of protest All kinds of slogans shouted were secular in character, having no concern with religion The labourers did not demand their rights in the name of religion This reflects the character

of this new movement"⁴³ The national awareness of the labouring masses in Kashmir, thus, explains their opposition to the Pakistan movement

Reaction to the Pakistan movement

Objectively, it was in the perspective of the emergence of labour movement and the regional-national consciousness that the nationalist forces in Kashmir reacted sharply to the Pakistan movement led by Jinnah. To counter the threat of Muslim communalism that was spreading in the wake of Pakistan movement and the partition of India, the AJKNC launched the 'Quit Kashmir' movement to salvage the tradition of secular nationalism in Kashmir. In a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission of 1946, it demanded absolute right to freedom from the autocratic rule of the Dogra house. The anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle reached another high pitch (first being 1931) in 1946. Launching this struggle for a decisive victory, Sheikh Abdullah, on 15 May 1946, reiterated at Srinagar: "The demand that the princely order should quit the state is a logical extension of the policy of 'Quit India'. When the freedom movement demands complete withdrawal of British power, logically enough the stooges of British imperialism should also go and restore sovereignty to its real owners, the people. The rulers of Indian states have always played traitor to the cause of Indian freedom. A revolution upturned the mighty Tsars and the French Revolution made short work of the ruling class of France. The time has come to tear up the Treaty of Amritsar, and quit Kashmir. Sovereignty is not the birth-right of Maharaja Hari Singh. Quit Kashmir is not a question of revolt. It is a matter of right."⁴⁴

These words of Sheikh led to his arrest on the charge of sedition against the Maharaja. Undeterred, Sheikh, from jail, urged the intensification of the movement, by saying: "Dear comrades-in-arms, this is a fight to the finish. Either we win our objective or we perish forever."⁴⁵ Following his arrest the whole Valley rose in an uprising. The reign of terror let loose by the Maharaja enraged Nehru, who called Srinagar a city of dead, and Sheikh Abdullah the beloved of the people. He led a team of lawyers (including Aruna Asaf Ali, Dewan Chaman Lal and Tilak Raj Chadha) on 19 June 1946 to defend Sheikh Abdullah at his trial. However, Nehru was also arrested by the Maharaja's administration when he proceeded to Srinagar. On this solidarity, were built the great bonds of personal and political affinity between the two leaders (Abdullah and Nehru).

Even after his arrival in Delhi, at the orders of the Congress president Maulana Azad, Nehru expressed his restlessness about the events in Kashmir. He complained to Gandhi that while India was on the way to freedom, people in Kashmir were groaning under the reign of terror and their leader Sheikh Abdullah was still behind the bars. Thus, Gandhi decided to visit Kashmir in early August 1947, as a guest of the

National Conference He was welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd of more than 20,000 at the Mujahid Manzil with screams of "Gandhiji ki jai" (victory to Gandhi) on 2 August 1947 (a few days before Pakistan was born).

The Quit Kashmir agitation, led by the Sheikh, was able to achieve its objective of keeping Muslim communalism in Kashmir at bay. Even Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, failed to prevent the Pathans from falling into communal trap. Jinnah's failure in Kashmir was total. Thus, having failed to control Kashmir, he decided to wrest it by force. The raiders were sent into Kashmir in the form of army units and irregulars for this purpose. But "they were so busy in looting and raping",⁴⁶ that instead of inspiring a hope in the chastity of the cherished Islamic state, they earned the wrath of the people for Pakistan. At this crucial juncture, when the Maharaja fled with bag and baggage, Sheikh Abdullah (who was staying with Nehru) urged Nehru to send the troops to rescue Kashmir. Nehru did so on 25 October 1947 after Kashmir had legally acceded to India.

The defeat of the Pakistan movement in the valley of Kashmir was complete when people were mobilized to repel the Pak-led attack. Sheikh Abdullah announced the formation of a peace brigade and also the people's militia for this purpose. This struggle against the Pakistani aggression produced legendary figures like Mir Maqbal Sherwani. On 27 October, Sheikh left for Srinagar to lead this resistance against Pakistani aggressors. He expressed the mood of the time and the people, when he said, "The grave of Pakistan will be dug in the valley of Kashmir."⁴⁷

Accession to India

The accession of Kashmir to India took place at a crucial juncture when the country was still not fully born from the throes of communal holocaust. Even during these days of darkness in the rest of India, Hindu-Muslim relations in Kashmir remained peaceful largely due to the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah, therefore, can be regarded as the doyen of nationalism in Kashmir, its tallest leader as well as an unflinching spirit. Even Gandhi could not restore harmony in the Hindu or Muslim majority areas of India during these days. Realizing this, therefore, Gandhi said, "My sole hope and prayer is that Kashmir should become a beacon light to this benighted sub-continent."⁴⁸ He did not forget to express his feeling for Kashmir, when he uttered the following words before his death, "I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."⁴⁹

The accession of Kashmir to India took place despite the best efforts of the British imperialists to hand it over to Pakistan. Having failed in doing so, Mountbatten impressed upon the Maharaja (during his visit to Kashmir in the summer of 1947) the need for a plebiscite (hoping that its verdict would go in favour of Pakistan), when most of

the leaders of the National Conference were still in jail. The British conspiracy was foiled by a good rapport between Sheikh Abdullah, Gandhi and Nehru. The Indian National Congress on the other hand demanded the release of Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders and the establishment of a popular government in Jammu and Kashmir. The accession of Kashmir to India was a political decision of the National Conference. It was not a legal but essentially political issue.

However, despite this politico-ideological affinity between the National Conference and the Congress (or Sheikh Abdullah and Nehru), the leadership of the former did not want an instrument of accession that would obliterate their regional-cultural pride. Thus, they favoured accession but with autonomy like any other nationality in India. They demanded special status because they were afraid that the cultural glory of Kashmir would not be secure if they did not have the full freedom for their cultural prosperity in every respect. This requirement of the only Muslim majority province in the Indian Union necessitated some political-constitutional safeguards within the Indian political system. In fact, Sheikh Abdullah believed that, "Indian political system can function more efficiently at a regional and trans-regional level of federal units than at all India level under unitary form of government. The actual function of an all India centre should be to maintain harmony of various local levels of Indian society by weaving them into a single whole nation. The centre should know its weaving-nationalist task and should not force its values and ideas on local cultures in such a way that they feel threatened and insecure."⁵⁰ Therefore, though the accession of Kashmir to India took place with massive popular will,⁵¹ it carried a condition regarding special position for Kashmir in the political-constitutional framework of Indian political system.

The autonomy principle applied in Kashmir reflects the vitality of the 'unity in diversity' principle of Indian nationalism. It also advocates the need for a genuinely federal democratic structure as the only viable model of national integration in India. However, the Indian state, from the very beginning, denied the validity of India's multinational character and the need for a genuine federal structure. And it is in this denial that national chauvinism in India can be located. It helped the growth of absolute nationalism to be defined by the Indian state, along with militant Hindu nationalism as propagated by Hindi-Hindu-chauvinist forces. Out of these two, the nationalism advocated by the state in India has its inherent dangers. Whereas nationalism by means of discourse and long social debate provides an opportunity for experimentation as well as assimilation of the desires of the people in national sovereignty, the state tries to inculcate nationalism by fiat and commands (which has more often than not proved fatal for national unity). At times even a critical scrutiny of these bureaucratic fiat is met by violent reactions as was evident in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination.

Thus, the failure of the ruling Congress party and the opposition

parties (with a few exceptions) to educate people about the nature of the multinational character of the Indian state and its workability through consensus and federalism has led to the growth of the irrational political ethos of communalism within the structure of Indian state and outside it, especially in the North Indian Hindi-Hindu hinterland. Therefore, unlike the South and North East India (where various regional communities of culture recognized each other's distinct personality), in the North Indian Hindi-Hindu mainland the recognition of Kashmiri personality by granting it a special position under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution produced a hostile backlash among the Hindi-Hindu fanatics of various shades. They also included those in power like Sardar Patel, who was opposed to the so called appeasement policy of Nehru towards Kashmir (or Sheikh). In the Hindi-Hindu belt of North India the Hindu lobby demanded an overriding homogeneity of the political processes of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India. They demanded conformity of minority to Hindu majority views as well as uniformity by force. The slogan of "Ek Pradhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Vidhan" (One Prime Minister, One Flag, One Constitution) was a key plank of their virulent campaign against the provisions of Article 370. However, it was precisely against the dangers of such procrusteanization that the provisions of special status for Kashmir were worked out. But having gone this far without any hindrance from the Indian government (they rather had the tacit support of its key officials including Patel, instead of stopping S P Mookerjee from crossing into Jammu and Kashmir, the officials in Punjab travelled with him and facilitated his crossing), the Hindu lobby finally led the non-cooperation movement against the first popular government led by Sheikh Abdullah.

These developments certainly shook the foundations of the nationalist traditions in the state, and for a moment even Sheikh Abdullah expressed his doubts over accession to India. In 1947-48 Sheikh Abdullah was a worried man because Hindu communal lobby (including Patel) in Delhi was deliberately trying to gift Kashmir away to Pakistan.⁵² The same lobby now led an intensive campaign against the government of Sheikh Abdullah. It was supported by the Jana Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha, the R S S and the Akali Dal. Tara Singh even called for "the assassination of Nehru", and S P Mookerjee called Nehru's Kashmir policy a "national liability". Thus, "the real attack was not on Abdullah but on Nehru".⁵³ Strangely enough, the support to this agitation also came from Jayaprakash Narayan (who in the post-Nehru period was calling for the release of Abdullah) and Acharya Kripalani. When Nehru appealed to them against this, Jayaprakash retorted that anti-communalism did not necessarily mean an acceptance of Nehru's method of handling this problem.⁵⁴ This fanning of the flame of Hindu communalism resulted in the ambivalence in Abdullah's position about accession to India.

Despite the fact that Nehru was opposed to any compromise between

these forces and Sheikh Abdullah, he was totally ineffective in rendering any support to the latter. According to S Gopal "the best approach in these circumstances seemed to be to suppress firmly the activities of the Hindu communalists which were little short of treason, thereby giving Abdullah time to recover his nerve. Nehru therefore ordered the prompt arrest of all those who participated in the agitation in Delhi and the Punjab, directed Pant to prevent the movement of volunteers from the UP into these areas, and asked Katju to consider the banning of the Jan Sangh. Nehru's hand, however, was weakened by the persistent inefficiency of the Home Ministry. Katju was unwilling to act on his Prime Minister's suggestions"⁵⁵ "Above all", says Gopal, "Nehru failed in his major thrust of seeking to isolate the communal nucleus of the agitation by establishing that Sheikh Abdullah's administration was secular, broadminded and national"⁵⁶

The growth of Hindu communalism and the weak position of Nehru justified Abdullah's fears. According to him, "it was a gradual victory of right-wingers, reactionaries and petty men. The reactionary elements had ample access to Delhi—not to Nehru's court but certainly elsewhere. Sardar Patel and several others had no faith in me. Nehru first resisted the campaign of vilification against me, but ultimately he succumbed"⁵⁷ Sheikh Abdullah now came to the conclusion that "there was no middle course between full integration and full autonomy (which was his euphemism for independence), and as the majority in Kashmir would not accept the first alternative, there was no choice but to accept the second."⁵⁸ Fearing that Sheikh might now raise the demand for an independent Kashmir, the government led by Nehru also joined hands with the Hindu communal lobby. Finally Sheikh Abdullah was arrested during the dark hours of the midnight on 8-9 August 1953. Thus, "in the state of Jammu and Kashmir where, because of historical conditions, special provisions were made to safeguard its almost complete autonomy (Art 370) these powers were encroached upon and the popularly elected leader of the state thrown into jail for over a decade."⁵⁹

When Nehru's government succumbed to the pressures of the Hindu lobby, it put the clock back to the 1930s and revised the gains of the freedom struggle in Kashmir since 1931. Now that the wheel had turned a full circle, it led to the emergence of separatist or anti-Indian sentiments in the minds of those very people who, under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah, were mobilized in the process of national liberation for 22 years (from 1931 onwards). They had so far rallied behind him in his struggle against feudalism of the Maharaja and the British imperialism, the Muslim communalism in the Valley, the Pakistan movement of the Muslim League, and for the cause of secularism in India. Now that Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and imprisoned in a most undemocratic and uncerecermonious fashion, the people started veering around to the idea of accession to Pakistan or an independent Kashmir. In fact, when Sheikh Abdullah was released for a short while in early 1958, the then Prime

Minister of Pakistan, Malik Feroz Khan Noon, said, "I am sorry, we have lost that platform now"⁶⁰ Even in the period of so-called wilderness of Sheikh Abdullah (1953 to 1975), the Plebiscite Front organized by his supporters remained the only representative organization of the people in the valley of Kashmir.

It can be argued therefore that whenever the Indian government does away with the provisions of the federal arrangement of special status (worked out for Kashmir) without the free will of the people of the Valley, there is every likelihood of regional nationalism finding its way into secessionism and communalism. Aggressive pan-Indian nationalism inevitably transforms a minor constitutional debate into a major political crisis, which may shake the very foundation of Indian national fabric in Kashmir. Not only in Kashmir but in North-East India, in Tamil Nadu and now in Punjab, the method of imposing pan-Indian Hindi-Hindu conformity and the code of conduct, or policy-making outside the parameters of genuine federalism, has led to the dangerous growth of communalism, chauvinism or secessionism. Amalendu Guha's study of North-East India is a good pointer in this direction.

"If Indian nationalism is shorn of its secularism and federal spirit, it degenerates into aggressive great nationalism. However, while regional nationalism may have its own points, if it is divested of the spirit of unity and assimilation, it degenerates into chauvinist—and in the extreme case—even into secessionist little nationalism. If the first tendency is present somewhat markedly in the Hindu-belt, the second tendency is there in some of our border states, particularly in India's north-east regions."⁶¹

The situation in Kashmir bears many similarities with that of North East India.

- 1 Cited in Hafiz Mohammad Ismail, *Personal Diary 1907-1950*, (manuscript unpublished), September 11, 1931. *Item I* As the only head priest of the Islamic Akal Takht in Kashmir Valley, Mirwaiz Maulvi Yusuf Shah, according to Makhdoom, wanted "every political decision taken by the Muslim leadership be enforced with his consent and according to his directions". Piri Mahammad Afzal Makhdoom, "The History of Freedom Struggle in Kashmir", *The Aina* (weekly), Srinagar, 30 September 1972, p. 4.
- 2 The landlords on the whole came out openly against the movement led by Sheikh Abdullah. One prominent landlord Nazir Hussain appealed to the people of the Valley not to heed to outside agitators (i.e. educated youth, particularly the activists of Reading Room Party fn 3). They cited Quoran to prove that those who were against their rulers were infidels. One Jagirdar Raja Villayat Ali Khan argued that, the Muslims had more confidence in Raja Hari Krishan than in thousands of Muslim wazirs. Another, Akram Khan, warned Kashmiris against falling into the trap of dangerous press propaganda. *The Indian Nation* (Patna), 22 September, 1931. According to Sheikh Abdullah, "During the crucial days of June-July 1931 the opportunist and conservative sections of Muslim leadership like Mirza Ghulam Mustafa, Munshi Assadullah and Rahim Shah Bandey, etc., suggested to the authorities to carry out drastic action against the agitators

Even Yusuf Shah was not happy with the increasing influence of the Reading Room Party. Hoping that after the upsurge subsided people would ultimately rally round him, he did not oppose us openly. Otherwise his political death would have occurred much earlier. And, this would have done good to the movement" (interview with Sheikh Abdullah, 30 June 1978, Srinagar)

- 3 The educated Muslim youth of Kashmir "started a Reading Room Party near Feteah Kadal in Srinagar, where most of them used to meet and discuss the current topics of the day" P N Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, Kashmir Publishing Co, Srinagar, 1941, p 98

About the origin of this group, M Y Saraf says "As no political or non-political society could be found, Mr. Mahammad Rajab, in collaboration with another zealous collegiate, late Mr. Bashir Ahmad who retired as Revenue Assistant, Muzaffarabad set up a small Reading Room in the house of one Syed Ali Akbar which was occupied by a post-master, Sikandar. It was cover meant to camouflage the political discussions held and to ward off immediate suspicion that could have otherwise attended the coming together of a dozen or more unemployed graduates. A sum of Rs 82 was raised by contribution to meet the cost of a newspaper. Encouraged by the response of educated Muslims and the interest shown by the uneducated, the Reading Room was given a regular organizational shape. An election was held in which Mohammad Rajab and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were elected President and Secretary respectively. Mufti Jalal-ud-din, Hakim Ali, Pizada Ahmed Shad Fazli and Hakim Ghulam Murtaza were elected to the managing committee.

"The plans that some of them had envisaged while at Aligarh now began to take shape. Having succeeded in setting up a base camp in the shape of Reading Room, they began establishing contact with the Muslim newspapers at Lahore. They also established contacts with Sri N L Bannerji who was editing a monthly magazine in London named, 'Indian States' which was exclusively devoted to the betterment of the inhabitants of the princely states. As a result of this contact, articles based on the data furnished by them began to appear in the magazine bringing home to British public opinion the pathetic condition of the states people. Maulana Azad welcomed the setting up of the Reading Room as the cornerstone of a bright future for the state."

Mahammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmir's Fight for Freedom (1819-1946)*, Lahore Feroz Sons, 1977, Vol I, pp 354-355

- 4 Hafiz Mohamad Ismail, *op cit*, 1 January 1933, Item I
- 5 For instance, under the leadership of Badshah Khan, when the N.W.F.P. Congress eventually decided to boycott the Plebiscite in protest, the N.W.F.P. went to Pakistan by a vote of 50.99 per cent of the total voting of 572,789, i.e., only 9.52 per cent of the total population of the province. See, Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947*, Delhi, Macmillan India Ltd., 1983, p 49
- 6 The best analysis of the specificity of the class character of the Pakistani state is found in the joint effort of 12 Pakistani scholars (rather the scholars of Pakistani descent), Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid (ed), *Pakistan The Roots of Dictatorship*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983. The principal thesis of these authors is that, over the years there has developed in Pakistan an intimate partnership between the military bureaucratic oligarchy, the feudal landlords and the post-partition indigenous bourgeoisie of merchants bankers and industrialists, leading to a profound imbalance in the socio-economic and political structure. There is also a broad consensus

among the authors that military dictatorship is the product, and not the cause of this imbalance. In this respect also useful is Hamza Alvi's seminal text, 'The Army and the Bureaucracy in Pakistan', *International Socialist Journal* March-April 1966

- 7 Based on the analysis of Prabhat Patnaik 'Imperialism and the growth of Indian capitalism', in B Sutcliffe and R Owen, *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, Longmans, London, 1972, Ashok Mitra, *Terms of Trade and Class Relations*, Frank Cass, London, 1977, Mathew Kurian (ed) *India State and Society*, Orient Longman, 1975. Other important contributions to this debate are by A K Bagchi, Amit Bhaduri, Utsa Patnaik, Ranjit Sau, and Ashok Rudra, etc
- 8 The sweeping land-reforms in Jammu and Kashmir were carried out in accordance with the formulations inscribed in the 'Naya Kashmir'. It was employed as a key measure to abolish feudal relations in the agrarian structure as well as a strategy to provide legitimacy, stability and a popular image to the leadership of the National Conference. The fact of radical-land reform measures is, thus, noted by everyone. For example, Kotovsky says, that the land-reforms and land ceiling laws were "fully carried out only in Kashmir. The settlement of the agrarian question in Kashmir proceeded more democratically than in the rest of the country", Gregory Kotovsky, *Agrarian Reforms in India*, People's Publishing House, Delhi, 1964, p 114
- 9 Pir Mohd Afzal Makhdoom, "The History of Freedom Struggle in Kashmir", *The Aina* (weekly), Srinagar, 17, May 1973, p 5
- 10 Telegram no 23/5 dated 13 May, 1907, from the Resident of Kashmir to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Simla, *Proceedings, September 1907, Government of India, Secret I Calcutta Records*, National Archives of India.
- 11 *File No 24N-118 of 1907, Kashmir Government Records*, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives
- 12 F M Hosanain, *British Policy Towards Kashmir*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1947 p 214.
- 13 *File No 23/31-C of 1919 old English Records*, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives
- 14 *File No, 61/30-C of 1919, Kashmir Government Records*, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives
- 15 P N Kaul Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, Metropolis Book Company, Delhi, 1971, p 706
- 16 Wakefields, *Recollections, Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 1940
- 17 *File No 1890, Foreign Department External—A Proceedings October 1890* Nos 176-180 (National Archives of India)
- 18 *The Kashmiri* (weekly) Lahore, 7 February, 1925
- 19 *Tiyag Bhumu*, Ajmer, Vol 3, No 2, 1929, p 169.
- 20 The spark of June-July 1931 was lit by an incident of 4 June 1931, when a constable of Jammu central jail, Fazlud, complained that one head constable, Labha Ram, had desecrated the Quran. The petition prepared by him was handed over to the higher authorities as well as the Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu. On the basis of an enquiry carried out by Wakefield when it was found out that, "no deliberate insult was offered to the Quran-i-Sharif and what happened was a pure accident" (*The Indian Nation*, Patna, 4 July 1931), the Maharaja's administration retired Labha Ram whereas Fazlud was dismissed for misleading people. This angered the Muslims of the state, leading to various protest marches etc, in Jammu and Srinagar. It was in one such

demonstration that Sheikh Abdullah was introduced to the people by Mouli Mohammad Yusuf Shah (interview with Pir Abdul Ahad Maulana Masoodi, and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah) In these meeting Sheikh Abdullah used to speak about the greatness of Quran, Islam as well as representative democracy (*Interview with Pir Abdul Ahad*, 20 June 1978) During this time when one such meeting was going on at Khanqah-i-Mualla that Abdul Quadir made his history-making speech

- 21 Abdul Quadir (an attendant of a British officer stationed at Peshawar) came to the political scene of Kashmir during a meeting held at Khanqah-i-Mualla (on 21 June 1931) "It was almost at the end of the meeting that this man", according to Sheikh Abdullah, "came to the dais and requested permission to make a brief speech In his fiery speech he exhorted people to rise from the thralldom of passivity to fight for their rights while saying "if we do not have machine guns there are enough stones and brickbats to reply" (*Interview with Sheikh Abdullah*, Maulana Masoodi, Pir Abdul Ahad) The CID version of Abdul Quadir's speech was 'Muslim brothers—the time has come when you must retaliate with full strength You stand on your feet and fight against tyranny Pointing towards Raajmahal, he said, to pay them in their own words," (cited in Rashid Tasir 'Historical Background of 13th July 1931', *Studies in Kashmir Council of Research*, Special Number Vol III, November, 1978, p 87) According to an eyewitness "nobody was going to follow him, but people sympathised with what he said" (*Interview with Maulana Sayed Masoodi*, 11 June 1978, Srinagar) Thus, none but the Maharaja took Abdul Quadir seriously by arresting him, which caused a great stir and tension in the valley, Abdul Quadir became a legendry hero of the people overnight, leading to brutal firing on unarmed masses on 13 July 1931 at Central Jail Srinagar (where they had thronged to witness his trial) From here onwards thus this day of 13th July is celebrated as Martyrs Day in Jammu and Kashmir Thus, a small period of 23 days shook the foundations of the 83 years' old rule of the Dogra monarchy
- 22 *Al Jamait* (Editorial), Delhi, 20 August 1931
- 23 *Al-Jamait* Delhi, 30 August, 1931
- 24 Letter from Tej Bahadur Sapru to Kashyap Bandhu, Albert Road Allahabad, dated 5 May 1934, *Sapru Papers*, Nehru Memorial Library, Teen Murti, New Delhi
- 25 Memorial presented to the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir by Kashyap Bandhu, *Sapru Papers*, *ibid*
- 26 *The Statesman*, 31 October, 1931, p 9
- 27 See fn 2
- 28 Cited in Hafiz Mohammad Ismail, *Personal Diary 1907-1950* (Unpublished Manuscript), 7 August, 1933
- 29 *The Alfazal*, Qadian, 1 September, 1931, p 7
- 30 *Al Jamiat* (Delhi), 13 August, 1931, p 5
- 31 G G Kotovsky, "The Rise of Anti-Imperialist Movement and the Struggle for a United Front (1928-1939)", in K Antonova, G Bongard-Levin, Kotovsky, *A History of India*, Moscow, Progress Publishers 1978, Book 2, p 197
- 32 "But", adds Prof Irfan Habib, "it was the anti-imperialist movement drawing the masses of Indian people in the struggle against British rule, that made loyalty to India supreme over all other territorial loyalties in the popular consciousness" Irfan Habib, "Emergence of Nationalities", in K Mathew Kurian and P N Varughese (ed), *Centre-State Relations* Delhi Macmillan, 1981, p 31
- 33 K K Mishra, 'Linguistic Nationalities of India' *Ibid* p 43

- 34 Lala Girdharilal Anand "Riyaset-mein-mashtrika platform ki Ashad Zarurat", *The Ranbir*, (Jammu), April 1935
- 35 N N Raina, Hegemony of the Working People A Specific Feature of Our Freedom Movement", *Studies of Kashmir Council of Research* Special Number, Vol III November 1978, p 6
- 36 *The Hamdard* (Weekly,) Srinagar, 9 Octo, 1937, p 7
- 37 Interview with Pir Abdul Ahad Srinagar, 22 June, 1978
- 38 Interview with Pir Giasudin, 21 September 1978
- 39 Interview with N N Raina, 16 June 1978.
- 40 Interview with N N Raina, 27 June 1978.
- 41 *New Kashmir, constitution and outline Economic Plan for the state of Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh and Frontier Regions and the Poonch and Chinnani Ilauas*, Introduction by Sheikh Abdullah, Kashmir Bureau of Information, New Delhi 1944
- 42 N N Raina 'Hegemony of the working people', op cit, p 13
- 43 *The Ranbir* (weekly) Editorial, Jammu, November 15, 1937, p 7
- 44 Cited in M J Akbar, *India The Siege Within*, Penguin Books, 1985, pp. 227-28
- 45 Quoted *ibid*, p 231
- 46 Tariq Ali, *Can Pakistan Survive The death of a state*, Penguin Books, 1988, p 72
- 47 *The Hindustan Times*, 5 November 1947
- 48 Cited in Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi The Last Phase*, Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House, 1958, Vol II, p 500
- 49 Cited in S Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru A Biography*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1979, Vol II, p 119 fn. 29
- 50 *Interview with Sheikh Abdullah*, 29 June 1978, Srinagar
- 51 A view expressed by all prominent leaders of the state like Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg, Mir Quasim, Maulana Sayed Masoodi, M Karra, Prof N.N Raina, and Farooq Abdullah, etc Interviews
- 52 See, M J Akbar, op cit, p 246
- 53 S Gopal, op cit, pp 122, 123
- 54 Jayaprakash Narayan to Nehru, 11 January 1953, *ibid*, p 123
- 55 *Ibid*, pp 125-127
- 56 *Ibid*, p 123
- 57 Cited in M.J Akbar, op cit, p 245.
- 58 Only a few days back Sheikh Abdullah had spoken "To say that those in whose hands lie the destinies of Kashmir state think in terms of independence is nothing but trash It is not in the interest of the people of Kashmir to be left alone unprotected" Speech, at Madras, 21 January 1953, in S Gopal, op cit p 127 fn 53 The same Abdullah when suggested about the idea of having independent Kashmir in 1949, is reported to have retorted sharply "No, no This would never work, Pakistan has already taught us a lesson Kashmir is too small and too poor Pakistan would swallow Kashmir at one gulp They have tried it once, they would do it again " From Y D Gundevia *Outside the Archives*, cited in M J Akbar op cit p 244
- 59 E M S Namboodiripad, "National Political Background of Indian Federalism", in K. Mathew Kurian and P N Varughese (ed) *Centre State Relations*, Macmillan, Delhi, 1981, p 71
- 60 Cited in M J Akbar op cit p 255
- 61 Amalendu Guha 'Pan-Indian and Regional Nationalism The case of North Eastern States', *Social Science Probings*, Vol I Number I, March 1984, p. 109

MEERA VELAYUDHAN*

*The Crisis and Women's Struggles in India
(1970-1977)*

RESEARCH into a neglected area in women's studies, i.e. the role and participation of women in various movements in both the pre-independence and post-independence eras, in India has just begun to emerge. Given this limitation, the reconstruction of a significant part of women's collective experiences, is a difficult task. However, even on the basis of this limited data base (a few research papers and newspaper reports), we find that a ferment existed in the 1970s among broad sections of women—agricultural workers, poor peasants, working class, middle class housewives, NGOs, students. Women participated in agrarian struggles, working class agitations, the anti-price rise movement, the food movement, the struggles for civil liberties, and against atrocities inflicted on women. These struggles and movements covered Kerala, Andhra and Tamil Nadu in the south, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat in the West, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi in the North, and West Bengal, Assam in the eastern part of India.

The role and participation of women in struggles in the 70s could be placed within the context of the crisis—both economic and political—towards which India was moving. Development planning since independence was leading to the poor becoming poorer, price rise and widespread unemployment. Official statistics reveal that the crisis was reflected in the trends of heavier tax burdens, low share of direct tax, growth of external debt and increasing expenditure on non-development sectors like the military, police and bureaucracy¹. The economy of the country was also characterised by its uneven regional development and this was indicated by the statistics on per capita income of the states.² That women's low economic and social status made them more vulnerable to the crisis can be seen from the CSWI Report itself³. The Report had highlighted the declining position of women particularly since independence. This decline manifested itself in the trends of excessive mortality among women and female children, disparity between men and women among the poorer sections in access to health care and medical services, continuous decline in the sex ratio of proportion of women in the population, increasing gap between men and women in literacy, education and training for

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employment and an accelerated decline in women's employment since 1951.⁴

Women's work participation had declined steadily through the colonial period and, after a small rise during 1951-61, had declined again during 1961-71. This decline was most pronounced in manufacturing, trade and commerce. In trade and commerce, women's participation had dropped from 2,226,000 in 1911 to 556,000 in 1971, in the non-household manufacturing, it had declined from 4,391,000 in 1911 to 865,000 in 1971.⁵ Women were also wiped out in large numbers from their large-scale participation in jute, textiles and mining.⁶ Although 73.9% of all working women were in agriculture in 1911 and 81.3% in 1971, the process of proletarianization was pushing them increasingly into the category of agricultural labourers. Therefore, in 1911 about 18 million women were cultivators and 13 million agricultural labourers while in 1971 about 16 million were cultivators and 20 million agricultural labourers.⁷ It needs to be noted that during 1961-71, the percentage of agricultural labourers to total workers in agriculture rose from 24.04% to 38.04% while the percentage of workers to the total population declined from 49.73% to 35.95%.⁸ Regional variation in women's work participation in agriculture is an important consideration since the states, (with the exception of West Bengal) with a high and growing percentage of agricultural labourers like Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra witnessed militant agrarian struggles during this period. Increase in women's employment was mainly "in the poverty oriented occupations, i.e. personal and domestic services".⁹ Poverty was forcing an increasing number of women into prostitution, the growing trend of trafficking in women and commodification of women for business purposes pointed to the devaluation of women.

The struggles in the '70s could, therefore, be placed in the context of this *generalised decline* in women's living conditions and social status. Politically, this period also witnessed increasing Opposition-led movements against the ruling Congress government and party at the regional and national levels. The Congress itself had faced internal splits and polarisation. The participation of women in struggles in this period needs to be considered in the context of these developments also.

In Kerala, this period saw the development of Communist-led mass movements by workers, peasants, students, teachers on their own issues as well as on general issues. A striking feature during 1971-73 was the militant participation of women in the Communist-led Karshaka Thozhilali Union (Agricultural Workers Union) agitation for the right to land, homestead, higher wages etc. These struggles were spread over Central Travancore, Alleppey, Kottayam, women participated in large numbers and their militancy even in the face of repression let loose by the landlords and police is still remembered by the people. Commenting on one of their demonstrations, a newspaper noted, "In their raising slogans and in their enthusiasm, the women left the men far behind. It was as if they had taken over Alleppey for the day. It was impossible to estimate how

many participated but half of them were women and most of them wore red blouses."¹⁰ A well-known struggle was for fixing working hours. The agitators would enter the fields in the morning, put up the red flag and, in the evening after work, remove the flag before leaving. Enraged at this attempt to enforce fixed working hours, "a landlord rushed towards the women workers brandishing knives and other weapons and stabbed seven of them"¹¹. They had to be hospitalised in Kottayam. Among the gains of the struggles were the right to homestead, increase in daily wages and prevention of mechanisation. At the Second Conference of the Agricultural Workers Union in October 1971, three women—Sarada Kunjan, Devooty, Meenakshi—were elected into the 30-member Executive Committee of the Union.¹² These three women activists were also members of the Kerala Mahila Federation and this led to an internal debate within the organisation on the issue of the relationship between the women's movement and the peasant movement.¹³

This period also witnessed widespread working class struggles in Kerala. In the traditional industries of coir and cashew which were facing a crisis, the struggles by the workers, mainly women, were intense. Throughout 1971-72, women workers in the coir industry were in struggle. In January 1971, over four lakh coir workers went on a day's strike led by the CITU Coir Workers Union on the issues of DA, nationalisation of coir export trade etc.¹⁴ From February 1971, they conducted a heroic 40-day strike which led to their winning leave with wages in factories, restoration of the DA cut, a raise in the prices of products of small producers. The demands for enhancement of DA and rise in daily wages were placed before the Industrial Relations Council for discussion.¹⁵ In March 1972, five lakh coir workers went on a day's strike for minimum wages, nationalisation of the coir industry, state control over prices of coconut fibre.¹⁶ In another agitation in May 1972 for the implementation of the minimum wages notified by the government, a 51-year old woman coir worker, Ammu was killed in police firing. This incident also led to widespread solidarity actions, particularly by the Kerala Women's Federation. Around this time, struggles were also conducted against attempts to mechanise the defibering process in the coir industry which took the form of Luddite type of actions.¹⁷ In August 1974, women coir workers went on a strike for minimum wages, DA, Bonus and the declaration of coastal areas as famine areas.

At the end of 1972, the CPI (M) and several mass organizations launched an anti-price rise agitation in Kerala. About 125,000 people participated in picketing programmes on the issue of price rise, unemployment and heavy tax burdens. A newspaper commented that "a notable feature of the days of picketing was the large participation of women". 5,000 women under the leadership of the Kerala Mahila Federation picketed the collectorate protesting against price rise.¹⁸ A statewide bandh was organised as part of the movement demanding food, and women participated actively.¹⁹ In Kerala, where there was intense political struggle

between the opposition particularly the Left and the ruling Congress party, the issue of political repression became the focus of agitation. Attack on women activists, particularly sexual attacks, by policemen, became a crucial issue and the Kerala Mahila Federation conducted struggles and campaigns against it. A statewide dharna was held before all the police stations in the state in 1976 against the rape of two young girls by the police in the lock-up and subsequent suicide by the girls. The Home Minister was forced to declare in the Assembly that no woman will be arrested after 5 O' clock and would not be kept under lock-up during the night time. The Kerala Mahila Federation also took up the issues of dowry, equal wages, creche facilities continuously in the early 1970s. Its membership was over 100,000 in 1970 itself and its main base was in Alleppey where the agricultural workers movement was strong.²⁰ An all-India Conference of women was held in Trivandrum in December 1975 and was attended by both women activists and academics. Women activists from Kerala raised the issues of alcoholism and wife-beating, as well as the prevalence of feudal attitudes within political parties and trade unions. Throughout 1971-72, cashew workers, again mainly women, conducted struggles against the closure of cashew factories of the Kerala Development Corporation.²¹ On February 9th 1973, a mass satyagraha was conducted by women teachers all over the State and was inaugurated by Susheela Gopalan.²²

In Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, the agricultural labourers, mainly Dalits, had been carrying on struggles against a predominantly Brahmin landlord class, particularly since 1966 when the landlord in Kilvenmani barricaded 42 women, men and children from the Dalit agricultural labourer families and burnt them. While women were always involved in the struggles, the formation of women's committees within the agricultural labour union led to the emergence of militant woman leaders. At the first conference of the Democratic Women's Federation at Thanjavur in December 1974, it had a membership of 27,000, over half of them being from the Dalit agricultural labourers from Thanjavur.²³ At the rally on the last day of the conference, 70,000 women participated, the Dalit women being the main force and the most visible.²⁴ Village-level study groups were developed to build up local leadership for women, the women's committees facilitated this task.²⁵ Earlier in September 1973 and in February 1974, anti-Price rise agitations were conducted on a mass scale in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). In April 1974, a one-day hunger strike by women against price-rise and high taxes was organised by the Democratic Women's Federation in which a striking feature was the participation of thousands of agricultural women workers from Thanjavur.²⁶

In Andhra 70,000 beedi workers in 220 centres in Khammam and Warangal struck work in August 1971. They faced severe repression from the police and in 15 centres received one paisa rise per bundle of leaves over the prevailing government rates. These areas were also facing famine conditions.²⁷ In October 1972, there was a 10-day picketing programme

in Andhra against price rise and for famine relief, organised by the Communists. 4,000 women volunteers participated and courted arrest widely. Preceding this, a political class was organised and an Executive Committee of the Andhra Mahila Sangham was formed and a 20,000 strong women's rally was held at Vijaywada to draw the attention of the government to the immediate demands of the people. In 1976, the Mahila Sangham launched a campaign against decadent culture perpetuated by pornographic literature and art. Other issues raised were for employment opportunities for women and for an end to trafficking in women.²⁸ Tobacco workers in Andhra struggled against retrenchment and on 23 March, 1973, struck work on the issues of wages and bonus for 1971. In Hyderabad city, a women's group, the Progressive Organisation of Women (POW) was founded in 1974 and its draft manifesto stated that women were an oppressed sex and therefore needed an organisation of their own which would struggle on economic, social and cultural issues.²⁹ This organisation developed from among a group of CPI-ML students and had its base among a section of students and some slum women. It campaigned on issues such as sexual harassment, dowry and rape.³⁰

At the national level, the issue of equal wages was taken up at the founding conference of the Plantation Workers Federation in November 1972. The CITU leader, B.T. Ranadive raised this issue at the conference saying, "This gross injustice meted out to women workers must be fought by the trade union movement." At the conference, a separate meeting of women workers was held. A pamphlet circulated at the conference indicated the unequal wages women received in the tea, coffee, rubber, cardamom establishments.³¹

In Maharashtra, the drought and famine during 1970-73 led to intense agrarian struggles in particular. This had forced the government to set up relief works such as Employment Guarantee Scheme in which the majority of workers were women. They were active in varied forms of agitations such as gheraos, blockages of roads, demonstrations on issues of work and equal wages. By 1973, the government granted them equal wages and by end of 1974, a Bill for minimum wages in agriculture was passed and the Rs 3 minimum wage per day was to be paid to both men and women. Agitations, mainly led by the left organisations, were conducted on issues of land, food, price rise. In May 1973, five Left Organisations—CPI, CPI (M), Lal Nishan, Peasants and Workers Party, and the Socialist Party—organised a general strike on 15th, in which a million and a half workers took part and the two communist parties organised a strike of 500,000 workers in Bombay in its support.³² Poor peasant and agricultural labourer women took an increasingly active role in the agrarian struggle.³³ A study on famine in Maharashtra noted that women were the most aggressive and persistent in demanding facilities on the relief works.³⁴

It was in the city of Bombay that the first women's agitational platform emerged. This was the United Women's Anti-price rise

Committee or Mahagai Pratikar Samyukta Samiti. The famine had not only affected the rural poor but also the urban population which faced skyrocketing price rise and scarcity of essential commodities. The origin of this Anti-price rise Women's United Committee could be traced to a municipal strike for bonus. The women from the CITU and HMP unions "staged an impressive morcha of extinguished choolas" in August 1972.³⁵ There were 1000 women in the morcha. Preceding this was a workers march of 10,000 "a significant part of them being women"³⁶ and this led to greater awareness among the organisations involved of the need to mobilise women. Although a non party forum, it had among its leaders Mrinal Gore (Socialist Party), Ahilya Ranganekar (CPI-M), Susheela Patel (BPCC), Kumud Gupta, Prema Paurav (CPI). The political orientation of this united women's committee "was against the big traders, the monopolists in league with each other against the people"³⁷ on the one hand, and "to building a strong women's movement on the other".³⁸ Although it was led by women leaders from the Opposition political parties, it represented and attracted women from all walks of life.³⁹ Its programme of agitation was always well planned. The forms of struggle were novel and popular. For example, "the thali beating protest evoked such wide response in Bombay that even the wives of the staff of Raj Bhavan participated in this novel protest".⁴⁰

The rolling pin morcha, the protest against unclean articles sold in ration shops which took the form of "Kachra Tula" or weighing the Chief Minister with kachra, the storming of the Mantralaya beating empty kerosene tins, proved to be very popular. The rolling pin morcha led to the supply of increased quota of kerosene, the Kachra Tula action led to the government making arrangements to clean the articles before sale at ration shops.^{41a} The agitation consistently exposed the policies of the ruling Congress party which were causing hardships to the common people. During the Emergency, 150 women participated in protest meeting and the leaders of the Anti-Price Rise United Women's Committee, Ahilya Ranganekar and Mrinal Gore were arrested, women collected 30,000 signatures demanding release of political prisoners.^{41b}

The militant and popular participation of women in these struggles led to the formation of working women's organisations by the two Communist parties. The Shramik Mahila Parishad which was linked with the CPI held its second conference in November 1973 and, the conference was attended by women from the Lal Nishan and Peasants and Workers Party also. Agricultural workers and working class women from the cities, who had participated in the on-going rural and urban struggles, attended the conference.⁴²

The CPI-M linked Shramik Mahila Sabha was established at a conference held in Bombay in January 1974 and its main units were found among the tribals in Dhulia and Thana districts and among workers in Ichalkaranj.⁴³ It also took up the issue of civic facilities in government housing colonies in Bombay.⁴⁴

In Shahda Taluk of Dhulia district in Maharashtra, the Shramik Sanghatana organised rural workers. It was during the 1972 struggles for land and wages that women became more conscious of their role and participation and of their own oppression.⁴⁵ Wife beating and alcoholism were major problems and were also interlinked. The first women's camp was organised in March 1973 and it was at this camp that women from the village of Karnkhada sought the help of the other women present to eradicate alcoholism. Spontaneously, all the women walked to the village, marched to the liquor dens and broke the pots.⁴⁶ This led to a spate of liquor-pot breaking actions in the whole area by groups of women. From their regular camps, processions, and public meetings in the villages emerged women leaders who could be contacted on any problem concerning women. The issues taken up included sexual harassment and exploitation by the landlords and rich peasants.⁴⁷ At their second conference in late 1973, a change came about in the perspective of the women activists. This was the result of interaction with women activists from Bombay and it led to discussions which linked women's specific problems with broader issues. For example, women considered the social and economic causes of alcoholism and gambling and how the local landlords and sections of the local bureaucracy benefited from the sale of liquor and therefore had a vested interest in maintaining the liquor dens in the villages.⁴⁸ According to a report, although the participation of landless women in the struggles were higher, the leadership came mainly from tribal peasant women who held small pieces of land.⁴⁹ However, any generalisation can only be drawn from a more intensive study of the struggles.

An independent Marxist group, Magowa brought out a women's liberation special issue which reported not only on the problems of middle class women but also those of the Dhulia tribal women. Its activists held study camps in Shahda⁵⁰ for women activists. Among the neo-Buddhist youth, the Dalit Panthers emerged as an important organisation and was among the first student organisations in Maharashtra to focus its attention on women's issues. Its Mahila Samata Samik Dal (League of Women Soldiers For Equality) was formed in 1975 among Buddhist students in Milind College in Aurangabad.⁵¹ The Lal Nishan Party joined the CPI in observing 8th March International Women's Day in 1975 in Poona in which hundreds of working class women participated. Socialist leader Baba Adhav organised Devadasi women and held a conference at Gandhinglax near Kolhapur in September 1975.⁵² On 18th and 19th October, 1975 a United Women's Literation Conference was held at Poona and had over 700 participants, two-thirds of whom were agricultural workers, and urban workers. Textile workers from Bombay, ginning and pressing workers, housewives, students, bank employees, Dalit municipal sweepers, professors, tribal women shared their experiences with each other. It was a broad Leftist forum politically, and consisted of representatives from the Lal Nishan Party, Magowa, Shramik Sanghathana, CPI-M,

Republican Party of India, the Socialist Party⁵³

By the end of 1972 the issues of inflation and food came to be focus of agitations all over India. Reports indicate the large scale and militant participation of women in these agitations⁵⁴. In Panjim, Goa, women joined demonstrations and courted arrest in October 1972. A marked feature was the participation by girl students led by Jaitumbi Suleman, a student leader. These struggles were conducted as part of the all-India agitational programme by the Communists⁵⁵. In Jaipur, Rajasthan 38 out of the 113 who courted arrest in October were women and all over Rajasthan 15,000 men and women participated in the anti-price rise demonstration also.⁵⁶ In March 1973, the anti-price rise agitation covered Gujarat also. In Baroda, the Shramik Mahila Sangh organised a demonstration to the office of the Collector. Speaking to the Collector, Anna Bai, an old Muslim woman said, "My husband earns Rs 105 per month, your ration shops are empty. In the open markets or blackmarket, wheat and other grains are sold at prices beyond our reach. We are starving, people in the neighbourhood are in the same condition. Does your government think of us?"⁵⁷ In Gujarat, it was the students who first in January 1974 raised the issue of rising prices affecting the hostel mess bills. This led to the formation of the Nav Nirman Yuvak Samiti and their agitation was named as 'roti riots' by the state government itself. It developed into a general mass movement against the corruption and anti-people policies of the state government. Women participated in large number and invented new forms of Gandhian non-violent resistance. For example, they faced police bayonets with garlands in their hands⁵⁸.

The student of Bihar also took to agitation forming the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti. It consisted of members of ABVP, Yuvjan Sabha, Tarun Shanti Sena and began its agitation in March 1974. They focused on issues of corruption in the government, the educational system, increasing unemployment, and rising prices. Following repression unleashed on the agitators, Jayaprakash Narayan began to provide the political leadership and called for a movement for 'total revolution'⁵⁹. The Charkha Samiti, some members of the AIWC in Patna women from the Jana Sangh came into the movement. Then teachers also came forward and participated in the meetings, processions.⁶⁰ They participated in the picketing programme at the Assembly, in the relay hunger strike, and girl students courted arrest. During April-May 1974, the Mahila Mandal and Mahila Sangharsh Samiti reported that "the women kept the movement going"⁶¹. They were active in the distribution of leaflets, food packets to those in prison, and in demonstrations against the AIR coverage of the agitations⁶². Women's participation, as those of other sections, was repressed during the Emergency which was proclaimed in June 1975. However, underground work to help political prisoners and in the civil liberties activities, saw active participation by women⁶³. Although JP did not give a call to women to join the movement, the issues affected women and they came out in large numbers, first through organisations and later

more spontaneously. In the Uttarakhand region of U.P., an agitation against deforestation developed in the Garhwal area in 1972-73. Led by Gaura Devi, twenty seven women participated in a struggle at Reni to prevent the contractor's employees and forest department personnel from cutting down the trees. That the issue of deforestation particularly affected women is highlighted by the fact that women became the main base of the Chipko Movement. Earlier in November 1971, thousands of women in Tehri Garhwal participated in a demonstration against alcoholism. About forty six of them were arrested for picketing a liquor shop.⁶⁴

In West Bengal, women participated in large numbers and in a militant manner in both the general class struggles and also in the political struggle. In 1973, Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti demonstrated against the government's food policy. In 1974, about 10,000 women demonstrated at the Governor's residence to demand food articles at fair prices and against political repression.⁶⁵ It may be noted that it was in West Bengal that the political struggle between the ruling Congress and the Communist Opposition took its most violent form. Women formed a crucial section in the growing resistance against political repression by the ruling party, facing torture by the police, rape and murder.⁶⁶ The attack on the President of the West Bengal Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti, Jyoti Chakravarty or Kaki Ma, indicated that organised women had become the target of political terror against the Left in particular. The 14th conference of the West Bengal Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti noted this role of women. Attacks on women activists—students, workers, peasants and middle class housewives—had become common. The sexual and other forms of torture faced by women political prisoners, both of the CPI-M and Naxalites, are now well known. The 14th conference of the West Bengal Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti in April 1973 indicated that women's struggles had taken place among the coalmine workers in Raniganj, in the tea gardens, among poor peasants and agricultural workers. "Women had got their heads broken in the struggle for the harvest", the report on the conference noted.⁶⁷ The conference also stressed the need to organise tribal and basti women. It also said that the organisation's influence among working class women was not reflected in its membership although the membership had grown tremendously.⁶⁸

The struggles in the '70s, the period of intense attacks on civil liberties, cannot be discussed without mentioning the heroic struggle of the railway workers and the support actions by the wives and women from the railway working class. They came into the struggle when, during the railway strike in May 1974, the police attacked the residential colonies of the workers. In West Bengal, Dhanbad, Delhi, Gauhati, the women faced the police raids bravely. According to a paper, "Never before had the country witnessed such heroism from women, starving and unorganised."⁶⁹ Women squatted on the railway tracks to prevent black legs from breaking the strike. A report from a railway colony indicates the resi-

stance offered by women to police attacks and the mood of the women was reflected in the statement of some women who said, "Oh, let them torture us as much as they wish. We will continue our fight. We will share our bread with dozens but our demands we will win."⁷⁰

In the capital city of Delhi, the Emergency saw several efforts by the ruling party to "clean" the city and remove the people from the slum areas to the "resettlement colonies". The struggles offered by the poor in the slums is still largely undocumented. However, during the proceedings of the Shah Commission enquiring into the Emergency excesses, it was revealed that hundreds of Muslim women put up brave resistance to forcible eviction in the Turkman Gate area of Delhi facing the bulldozers.

It may be pointed out that the significance of two other important developments which concerned the women's movement—the declaration of the UN International Women's Year in 1975 and the CSWI Report—was somewhat lost and minimised in the context of the political Emergency. This is strikingly indicated by the Parliamentary debates in 1976.⁷¹ The CSWI Report, for instance, was taken up for discussion during the last hour on the last day of the session of Parliament and copies of the Report had not reached most of the members, the Report received the same shabby treatment which the ruling Congress government had meted out to vital issues concerning women.

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NOTE

P Sundarayya and The Land Question

ON MAY 19, 1985, the revolutionary movement in India, lost one of its greatest heroes, in the death of Puchalapalli Sundarayya P S. had all the qualities of head and heart, which make a revolutionary leader and which led him to become the first general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), a post that he held for several years. Anyone coming in contact with him was immediately struck by his unfailing modesty and sincerity of purpose. His many-sided life and activities, particularly his role in organising the Telangana people's armed struggle, are all too familiar. In this brief tribute, his contribution to the understanding of the agrarian situation, in particular, the land question, is recalled.

The pamphlet, *The Land Question*, appeared in 1976, but there was a prelude to it in his *Explanatory Note to the Central Committee Resolution on Certain Agrarian Issues*, appearing in 1973. Both these documents have gone a long way in providing a correct and complete understanding of the agrarian situation in India.

The *Explanatory Note* brought clarity to the understanding of the agrarian situation in India. The situation as it exists is not classical feudalism, nor is it developed capitalism, but it is both feudal and semi-feudal, meaning thereby that capitalist exploitation is super-imposed on the old feudal system. The anti-feudal revolution has to be directed not only against feudal landlordism but against capitalist landlordism as well, which has got enmeshed with the former.

About 5% of the rural households, constituting the landlords, have each holdings over 20 acres, and together own about 40% of the total operational holdings. P S. calculated that if only the land above the ceiling were taken from them for distribution, then 5 crore acres of land would be available for distribution, but if all the land, including that below the ceiling, were taken for distribution, then an additional 6.32 crore acres would become available as surplus. If all the land of the landlords, including that below the ceiling, were confiscated and distributed among the agricultural workers and poor peasants, then each of these households would receive one to one and a half acres more of land, than what would have been available to them if only the land above the ceiling were distributed, and this would ensure a minimum landholding of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres (in some states even 5 acres) per household. What however needs to be noted is that even after this measure, full employment and a mini-

imum reasonable standard of living to each agricultural household cannot be provided and that this only provides some relief. To be able to realise full employment and a reasonable standard of life, a significant part of the rural households would have to be drawn into industrial and other non-agricultural spheres of activity

The *Explanatory Note* is indeed a great contribution in clarifying many points, particularly on tenancy-related questions. The *Note* also brings into focus the relative importance of various struggles in the agrarian revolution. The struggles have to be organized mainly on the demands of agricultural workers and poor peasants, relating to wage, land, etc. the demands of the middle and rich peasants for fair prices for their produce, should also be taken up.

The *Land Question* was indeed one of P S 's significant contributions. This work is an important methodological study which enables us to identify clearly various social classes in the rural areas, which is by no means an easy task as the economic activities of various social classes often overlap. P S was able to discern clearly the complexities involved and arrive at meaningful and operational categories of various social classes engaged in agriculture, and to define the political attitude to be adopted towards each of these social classes. The *Land Question* contained case studies of two villages, Anantavaram in Tenali taluka (a wet village) and Kaza in Guntur taluka (a wet cum dry village), both in Guntur district. While the agrarian situation varies somewhat across the different regions within the country, possessing different histories of land tenure, different magnitudes of tenancy and different levels of development of capitalism in agriculture, *The Land Question*, nevertheless, lays down the basic methodological framework for studying any region even if the categories require some modification before they can be adopted for study and political work. With painstaking detail, comprehensive economic information was collected on the two villages, making the work a landmark in studies on agriculture in the country and a classic. *The Land Question*, brings to mind Mao Tse Tung's "*Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society*" for its lucid exposition.

It is not enough, that there be distribution of surplus lands of the landlords among the agricultural labour and poor peasantry, but that all the lands of the landlords, including holdings below the ceiling, need to be confiscated and distributed. The Naxalite solution to the land question is also inadequate and naive, as immediate armed struggle can neither materialize on a large scale nor realize anything. People take to armed struggle only in self-defence and when their democratic rights and movements are suppressed by the government with violence. Only through years of patient work among the people, taking up their day to day economic and social problems, can the required consciousness be brought about and the organization built. In the absence of this, they end up organizing anarchic and adventurist actions, the result of which is that their forces get split and atomised.

The social classes engaged in agriculture have been classified as shown below

(i) Landlords are those families, who are not physically participating (i.e. are not involved in manual labour) in the major agricultural operations and are either leasing out their land or employing farm servants and wage labour, and are only supervising the work of the latter. In A.P. landlord families own more than 10-15 acres wet or more than 20-30 acres of dry land.

(ii) Rich peasants—Peasants are to be distinguished from landlords by their physical participation in the major agricultural operations. The rich peasant physically participates in all major agricultural operations on his holding, whether owned or leased. He employs farm servants and wage labour as well, and the mandays contributed by them exceed those of his family during any given year. Alternatively, the rich peasant could be viewed as one whose income derived from family labour is less than that of farm servants. In A.P. such families own between 5-10 acres of wet or 10-20 acres of dry land.

(iii) Middle peasants also employ farm servants and wage labour but the mandays contributed by family labour exceeds those of farm servants and wage labour. Alternatively, they could be viewed as those families whose income derived from family labour exceeds that of farm servants and wage labour. Another feature, which distinguishes the middle peasant from the rich peasant is that while the latter has regularly a surplus available with him which could be used for investment, the middle peasant has such a surplus only in good years. Middle peasant families in A.P. own between 2-5 acres of wet or 5-10 acres of dry land.

(iv) Poor peasants are those families who do not possess a surplus, and at best either break even or have a deficit which compels them to work either as wage labour or in some subsidiary occupation to supplement their income. The main income therefore is from the plot of land they own. If under certain circumstances they engage wage labour, it is usually less than the wage labour which they themselves offer. Poor peasants in A.P. own between 1—2 acres of wet or 2—5 acres of dry land.

(v) Agricultural labourers are those who mainly live on wage labour. By and large they are landless, but even if they were to own plots, it would not measure more than an acre, and the main income of such families would be on account of wage labour rather than what is derived from the plot of land.

Agricultural labourers and poor peasants constitute 70 per cent of the rural population in A.P. but own only 15 per cent of the cultivated lands. On the other hand landlords in A.P. constitute 5 per cent of the rural families but own 45 per cent of cultivated lands. P.S. calculated that if all the lands (inclusive of lands below the ceiling) owned by the landlords in A.P. were confiscated and distributed gratis to the poor peasants and agricultural labour, they would end up possessing 2.5 acres

each (inclusive of the land which is already in their possession) If cultivable waste lands, pastures, and forest banjars where trees do not grow, were made available for distribution and brought under cultivation, an additional 2-3 acres of land can be made available to each of the poor peasant and agricultural labour families

The problem of tenancy was dealt with brilliantly by P S. Though in A P. tenancy is not the main form of cultivation, 15-20 per cent of the cultivators depend upon leased land. Legally recorded tenants are few. The government refuses to maintain tenancy registers and protect the tenants. Most of the tenancies therefore are oral and not written agreements. Most of the tenants are poor peasants and agricultural workers, who have no choice but to take the land on lease, as their own holdings are pitifully small. Since there are no written records, there are effectively no tenancy rights, and consequently the landlords evict tenants at will. Even though the law has fixed rents at 25 per cent for dry lands and 30 per cent for wet lands, the actual rents range between 50 to 75 per cent of the produce. The absurdly high rents are a consequence of the poverty of peasants, forcing them to lease in land, creating thereby the demand for land, and the absence of any security of tenure, which makes the high rents possible. The alternative to leasing in land is to offer wage labour, which again depresses the wage rate. The existence of a large amount of rural unemployment, creates a supply of labour, which keeps wages low. A solution to the land problem, by abolishing landlordism, and by distributing gratis land to the tiller takes care of both the problem of high rents and low wages. But until the agrarian revolution is realized, the demand for higher wages, lower rents and security of tenure are to be viewed as partial struggles necessary for creating the requisite consciousness, for the larger struggle.

In the death of P Sundarayya, the poor and toiling people of India have lost a saint and a revolutionary hero. As E M S Namboodiripad wrote, the best tribute that can be paid to him, is by moving forward from strength and to strength, and each one of us contributing to the movement in our own little way.

SRIDHAR KRISHNA
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Delhi University, Delhi.

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BOOK REVIEW

K. SUBRAHMANYAM, (ed). Nuclear Proliferation and International Security (New Delhi : Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, 1985), 310 PP, Rs. 150

EVER since the advent of nuclear weapons, the issue of proliferation has exercised the minds of policy-planners and defence specialists. Despite restrictive laws and procedures, it is a known fact that 40 years after the atom bombs that wiped out Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the spread of nuclear weapons has become an issue of some concern. As of today, the US, USSR, France, Great Britain, China are openly acknowledged nuclear weapons powers with Israel, South Africa and India in a list of "undeclared" powers and Pakistan verging on attaining this status or even possibly leapfrogging to the former status. However, the range of possible nuclear weapons' states is actually quite large encompassing some 17 nations including those listed above, as well as Brazil and Argentina in South America to South Korea and Taiwan in East Asia and virtually all the West European countries.

From the beginning, nuclear weapons powers have attempted to impose a non-proliferation regime on other states. This has been done through bi-lateral arrangements and secret protocols at first and culminating in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty sponsored by the US, UK and the USSR in 1968. It has been the contention of India from the very beginning, K. Subrahmanyam points out, that the treaty is fatally flawed in that it did not seek to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons but addressed itself only to the dissemination of weapons to the non-nuclear states. Equally important from the point of view of equality of states in international relations was the fact that it did not attempt to do away with the special status conferred on the nuclear weapons themselves. In short all it did was to confirm the superiority associated with power and prestige conferred on the nuclear weapons powers without any commitment towards international nuclear disarmament.

K. Subrahmanyam has been one of the most consistent and ardent critics of the NPT and his main plank has been to take issue with the continuing and burgeoning vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons especially in the case of the two main nuclear weapons states—the US and the USSR. In the 15 years that the treaty has been in force, for

example, the number of strategic nuclear warheads possessed by the two powers have increased from approximately 5,000 to 23,000. Subrahmanyam therefore contends that the problem in the intervening periods has not been so much of 'new nations becoming self-acknowledged nuclear weapons powers' but the continuing qualitative and quantitative proliferation being carried out by the sponsors of the treaty

Subrahmanyam discusses this issue at length in a chapter examining the real contours of proliferation. He focuses on the nuclear weapons in terms of their large-scale global deployment, and the loosening of the command and control of the nuclear trigger. This has been a proliferation which has not been addressed to by the treaty or its two subsequent reviews since the guilty parties have been the nuclear weapons states themselves. Given the strict controls with which the Soviet Union handles its own weapons, allowing no participation by the Warsaw Pact countries, the problem is really one of NATO alliance, in which the US shares its nuclear weapons with its allies.

One aspect of the situation is the horizontal proliferation within the armed forces of the main nuclear weapons powers. Here Subrahmanyam points out, several problems that arise. In the command and control systems dealing with nuclear submarines for example the nature of the deployment leads to the diffusion of central authority in the command and control procedures. Besides the problem of submarines where the problem of communications have compelled a certain degree of command autonomy, there have been authenticated reports of similar delegations with regard to other forces as well especially NORAD (North American Air Defence Command) or the NATO.

In fact, Subrahmanyam has adduced sufficient evidence to point to the alarming fact that the command and control of nuclear weapons far from being in the black-box accompanying the President of the US may now be delegated to such levels that the danger of an inadvertent nuclear conflict has increased sharply. He has cited Lord Solly Zuckerman's observation that "prior release" orders for the nuclear weapons was axiomatic in the case of tactical nuclear weapons that the US possesses in abundance and deploys mainly in Western Europe. The thousands of warheads designed to fire from artillery guns or small tactical missiles, presumably in conventional conflict scenarios make central command and control of nuclear weapons an impossible proposition.

Another less discussed aspect of proliferation is the impact of new technologies interfacing with the nuclear weapons. By definition this is a problem confined to the established and technologically advanced nuclear weapons states. The laboratories and research establishments of the advanced countries are not covered by the NPT. C. Raja Mohan has pointed to the shift in the western attitudes towards the transfer of *any* nuclear technology for weapons or other uses to Third World countries. The destruction of the internationally safeguarded OSIRAK reactor by Israel and the western acquiescence of the act marks the new phase of western strategy where,

the basic thrust is the mistrust of non-nuclear weapons powers and the desire to further restrict the Third World access to any type of nuclear technology in the name of nuclear non-proliferation

Among the new technologies according to Raja Mohan that are qualitatively altering the proliferation regime are the "third generation" nuclear weapons which are focussing on developing and enhancing specific effects of a nuclear explosion, i.e. developing enhanced radiation weapons as exemplified by the neutron bomb. Another idea being explored is the EMP bomb which will through the intense electromagnetic pulse generated by a mid-air nuclear explosion destroy unprotected electronic systems of the adversary. While the EMP phenomena is a recognized fact, the trick is to develop weapons that will eliminate opposition satellites and communications systems without affecting those of the friendly countries. Another aspect of the third generation nuclear systems is the development of the X-ray laser, created by a small nuclear explosion. The laser beam so-generated is being touted as a means of destroying Soviet ICBMs in their boost phase. Incidentally, another accepted "civilian" technology i.e. particle accelerators are also being transformed into tools of military research from their original purpose of investigating atomic structures. Yet another aspect of proliferation is indirect—using nuclear power to propel military vehicles. These may range from ships and submarines and satellites. Nuclear power reactors are being refined under the influence of the star wars plan to enable space-based power stations to energize beam-weapon systems.

Raja Mohan points out that in such cases the NPT is silent. In this connection he notes the steady militarization of civil nuclear programmes, regulation of international trade in nuclear materials and technology as well as agreed programmes of disarmament are the issues that should be taken up if we are to create a genuine non-proliferation regime. Unfortunately, the continuing set of interests that shaped the NPT have not altered and thus nothing is likely to emerge in the near future.

In a subsequent chapter, Raja Mohan argues that the existing nuclear weapons powers have indulged in proliferation of another type i.e. developing bases and facilities all over the world thus encouraging a globalization of possible nuclear conflict. Combined with the problems of command and control of nuclear forces as argued by Subrahmanyam, Raja Mohan's argument is potent in the light of recent revelations that the Pentagon has plans to position nuclear weapons in over a dozen countries around the world where they are not positioned now.

PKS Namboodri has pointed out the fallacies evident in the concept of nuclear defence, popularly known as 'Star Wars'. He has questioned the role of the SDI in altering the situation. Besides the destabilizing nature of the star wars programmes, he points to the spin-off effects of an establishment of such a system on existing weapons limitation treaties like the ABM treaty and the treaty on banning weapons in outer space. In another chapter, he outlines the nature of the recent researches on the

nuclear winter The validation of this fourth effect of nuclear war i.e. nuclear winter, besides heat, blast and radiation, is now fairly well established Citing current research on the subject, Namboordri points to this most frightening and most recently discovered aspect of nuclear war "raises a number of questions about the validity of current nuclear doctrines and warfighting plans."

Jasjit Singh has focussed on an important aspect of the problem of proliferation He notes the developments and advances in the conventional war fighting capabilities around the world today He notes that various theories of nuclear threshold do not take into account the existing realities First, many of the theories are western and one-sided, allowing for possible misinterpretations Second, the existence of nuclear weapons of various categories ranging from the tactical artillery shells to strategic intercontinental missiles presupposes their use in certain contingency even in a conventional war Once the war threshold is crossed, he argues, it is all too easy to cross the nuclear threshold as well

Added to this general problem is the development of new weapons in the conventional arena The lethality of certain conventional weapons systems and warheads, he argues, lowers the nuclear threshold as well Advances in precision guidance such as the terrain matching radar, and electro-optical and laser designated guidance systems have made the delivery of conventional ammunition with pinpoint accuracy New munitions such as the MW-1 system or the CWS developed by West Germany or the fuel air explosive systems can approach lethality levels of small nuclear weapons that make nuclear responses more probable.

In the light of this, it is correctly argued by Subrahmanyam that review conferences like the one due to be held in August—September this year are farcical exercises that have not achieved anything. However, it is more difficult to take at face value his argument that acquisitions of nuclear weapons by new nations may in fact contribute to increased stability Perhaps it is not too late to make yet another push to halt the burgeoning vertical and spatial proliferation and addressing the attention of the world towards the heightened dangers from the new and untenable ideas like the Strategic Defence Initiative. Nevertheless, books like the one under review are an important contribution in pointing out to the world the dangerous delusions that surround the even limited attempts that have been made to tackle the dangers of nuclear war, until now

—MKJ

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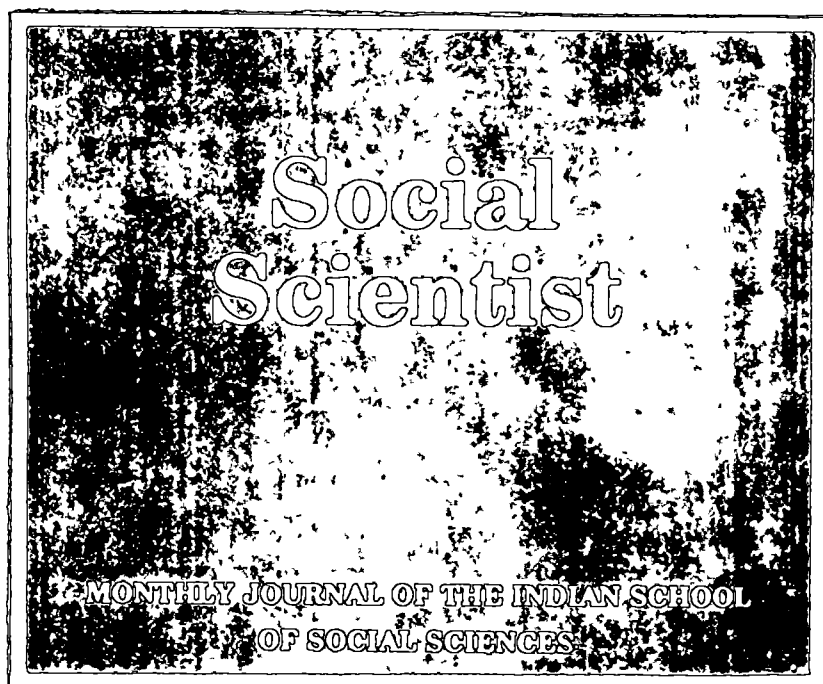
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**INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND THE ECONOMY ● PROFIT
INFLATION, POVERTY AND EMPLOYMENT ● BALANCE
OF PAYMENTS UNDER THE NEW REGIME ● LAND
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*Articles and review express the views of the authors and not necessarily of
the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences*

Editorial Note

THE FRUITS of the new economic policy ushered in by the Rajiv Gandhi Government have already begun to appear. According to the latest trade statistics, the first four months of the current financial year have witnessed a nearly 80 per cent increase in the size of the country's trade deficit. Compared to a deficit of about Rs 1,705 crore during April-July 1984, the figure for the current year is Rs 3080 crores. This massive increase is due to the fact that while exports have remained virtually stagnant, imports have forged ahead by nearly 30 per cent. Whether or not there have been some special factors contributing to this import splurge through a "bunching" effect, is beside the point. The basic fact is that while imports are pushing ahead, exports refuse to budge. The policy of import "liberalisation" which was supposed to boost our exports is pushing the country, as many had feared, into a veritable payments crisis, whose impact will be felt by all.

While it is true that a hall mark of the society we live in is that willy-nilly we are required to become economics conscious, this requirement becomes more pressing at certain times than at others. Now is one such time. Difficult days are ahead and it is important for all thinking persons to come to grips with, and actively intervene in, what is going on in the realm of the economy and economic policy. It is in this context that *Social Scientist* which recently brought out a double number devoted to a discussion of the new turn in economic policy, is following it up in the current issue with some more articles dealing with economic matters. This is by no means for a lack of choice in selecting articles, on the contrary it represents a deliberate exercise of choice in keeping with the imperatives of the present situation which we hope our readers will understand. Bombarded as they are with the paeans of praise being loudly sung in the bourgeois press to the "pragmatic" new policy being introduced by a "dynamic" leadership, we would like to bring to their ears the critical voices which are being raised in conventions and seminars across the country, which barely, if at all, get a passing mention in the media.

The lead article by Arun Ghosh, Amiya Bagchi and Sreemanta Dasgupta provides a critical review of the new trends in industrial, including textiles

policy and exposes the facile nature of the generalisations about 'export-led growth' and 'public sector inefficiency' which have been floating around in the media lately, C P Chandrashekhar's paper underscores the seriousness of the payments position by making statistical projections, based on a careful analysis of past data, of the different elements entering into the balance of payments. The paper thus questions the very assumptions underlying current trade policy. Interestingly the paper was written before the figures for the current year became available, these figures, while confirming the general drift of the paper's analysis, show the actual situation to be more dismal than anybody had suspected. Utsa Patnaik's paper on anti-poverty schemes is simultaneously a critique of the entire strategy of planning, especially of plan-financing, in the country, which is designed to engender a "profit-inflation" of the sort that even John Maynard Keynes had warned against, the new turn in economic-policy, she argues will only carry this profit-inflation even further.

The current number also carries two important papers on our neighbouring economies. Much discussion has taken place in India as well as abroad about the precise nature and implications of the changes in economic policy and organisation introduced in the post-cultural revolution period in China, Arun Prokas Chatterjee's piece detailing his discussions with Chinese economists and officials and his own personal impressions during a trip to China should be of interest in this context. The paper by Shaikh Muhammad Rashid who was entrusted with the main responsibility for implementing land reforms in Pakistan under Bhutto, about the contents of, and the problems faced by, those reforms has an obvious documentary significance in addition to the information it provides.

AMIYA BAGCHI *
ARUN GHOSH **
SREEMANTA DASGUPTA ***

Industrial Policy and the Economy

THE INDUSTRIAL policy that has been initiated in 1985, by the Government of India is the culmination of a policy of drift which commenced around 1966. Today, the policy is characterized by total surrender of the policy of self reliance, and a reversal of the growth policy based on India's natural endowment.

What are the major planks of the present industrial policy of the Government of India? Putting the most *favourable interpretation* of the various policy decisions announced recently, they may be briefly summed up as below:

(a) That Indian industry should be fully competitive with industry abroad, and should therefore be opened up to the full blast of international competition through a liberal import policy, (however, this is not strictly followed through),

(b) That to this end, Indian industry should be free to import whatever technology it wishes to,

(c) That the consumer should have a free choice in regard to all types of consumer goods (including luxury consumption goods), in respect of which, therefore, all restraints on production should be withdrawn,

(d) That in view of the inadequacy of home demand, Indian industry should seek markets abroad, and as a result develop in the light of demand for Indian goods abroad,

(e) That the public sector should stand on its own, and where unable to do so, should either be privatized or suffer a slow death, and

(f) That sick industries may also be allowed to die, or industry may be allowed to retrench labour in order to avoid sickness, and taken over units should be handed back to their erstwhile owners.

The Government's industrial policy has not, of course, been spelt out in so many words. But the various policy measures pursued, in particular the import liberalization measures adopted, the tax adjustments made in favour of a number of specific large scale industries, the policy adjustments affected in the name of technology import, and the treatment meted out to public sec-

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tor enterprises, all tend to reinforce the view that the Government no longer sets store by the policy of self-reliance, and that the shift of policy is in favour of a policy of "export-led growth". This is not overtly stated—in fact, the catchword used of late is "growth-led exports"—but the message comes loud and clear. The scenario today is that public sector enterprises—while remaining hamstrung by both bureaucratic control and political interference as well as inadequate funding even for normal replacements and modernization—can wither, or can be offered to private industry to manage. Even erstwhile sick (private) units which have been nursed back to health after takeover of management by Government are to be handed back to their erstwhile owners.

The changes in the Government's policy are supposedly induced by a recognition of the failure of the older policy of indiscriminate protection of domestic industry and an extension of the public sector. No attempt has been made, however, to look closely at the socio-economic factors responsible for the lack-lustre performance of Indian industry, and of the public sector enterprises in the past, let alone tackle those factors at their root.¹ Failing to reduce poverty on any scale, the policy of poverty reduction has been practically given up, except in name. No attempt has been made to really absorb and to deepen the technology already imported. The new policy builds not on the strength of the old economic policies but on their weaknesses.

The recent changes in Government's industrial policy appear to have been influenced by the private corporate sector's insistent claim that only the industrial licensing and other restrictive policies of the Government have been responsible for the stagnation of industry since the mid-sixties. The strong urging of international lenders (led by the World Bank and IMF), to liberalize imports and to open up the economy to international competition, also appears to have played a part in the formulation of these policies. Their hands have been strengthened by a group of middle-level non-resident Indian capitalists who want to move their capital back and forth between India and the international market, and between one quick-yielding venture and another as it suits them, without let or hindrance. The focus has apparently been to give free rein to the play of market forces for the allocation of resources.

Although the latest industrial policy of the Government does not overtly seek to follow the policy of "export-led growth", in practice, the various measures adopted appear to be based on an acceptance of this principle. It may therefore be useful to briefly examine the basics of, first, the argument regarding "export-led growth" *vis-a-vis* industrialization based on import substitution, and secondly, the policy on technology import now adopted.

The results of a few manifestations of the present policy of Government would be briefly reviewed later.

The Prospects of "Export-led Growth"

Much of the present thrust in the matter of import liberalization stems

from recommendations of Bela Balassa and other believers in the theory of export-led growth, based on the experience of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Significantly, the examples of Brazil, Argentina and Mexico are now carefully suppressed, though five or six years back, they were also held up as shining examples of the success of this policy.

In a world of fast changing technology, several types of policy adjustments can be made by a country. The proper approach would be to adopt an "active adjustment policy", wherein the policy makers look ahead to future comparative costs, based on the removal of structural bottlenecks, and on long term real resource availabilities. An 'active adjustment policy' does not have to be based on the dictum of exploiting external markets at faster than normal rates. An "active adjustment policy" is no different from a dynamic policy of self-reliance which is based on the endowment of resources, including human resources, of a country.

In a world of fast changing exchange rates and import policy changes by other countries, there could arise the need for a less ambitious policy, less attuned to long term comparative costs. Such a policy may be defined as a "positive adjustment policy", seeking to make use of medium term expectations of world supply and demand. In times of extreme stress, one may need to make purely "defensive adjustments" from time to time. But in all these policy options, there is need for careful evaluation of the status, and the competitiveness of indigenous industry, which cannot just be thrown to the wolves. Even assuming that one is wedded to the dictum of competitiveness and export-led growth, one has to keep in mind long run competitiveness, one has to pursue an "active adjustment policy" which seeks to take note of long term comparative advantage. Exports, in this case, would grow provided world market conditions are favourable. But that is in any case a necessary condition. Exports cannot grow, no matter what policy changes are introduced, if the trading conditions in the rest of the world are not favourable. But there is no room here for panicky changes in policy, since every country may be expected to take to "defensive adjustments" against any aggressive "over-sell" policy.

The policy of export-led growth which is advocated by international institutions and researchers, is most untimely today, and may be likened to pursuing a mirage, because all forecasts of world trade appear to predict its stagnation and a decline in the growth rates of developed nations. As a result, there is unlikely to be any great surge in world demand for Indian exports of manufactured products. It is possible that a few products or a few individual manufacturers may register a marked improvement in exports, but the overall rate of growth of exports is unlikely to be substantial. Even the OECD has forecast a sharp decline in world trade, and in world imports from developing countries.² Indeed, the latest World Bank projection predicts a trade deficit for India of Rs. 9,374 crores in 1987-88 from a level of around Rs. 5,700 in 1983-84, and the present policies of import liberalization with a view to making industry more competitive, can only worsen the position by

increasing imports with no corresponding increase in exports

If one considers that India's outstanding foreign debt, as on March, 1985, was Rs 25932 crores in respect of Government loans and Rs 758 crores in respect of non-Government loans, the enormity of the medium term balance of payments problem facing India becomes clear. According to the debt re-payment schedule, beginning with Rs 2483 crores in 1985-86, it would reach a peak of Rs 4045 crores in 1988-89 before tapering off, if new loans are not resorted to in the meanwhile, which is an unrealistic assumption because the deficit in the intervening years would necessarily have to be covered by international borrowing. It is significant that A W Clausen, President of the World Bank, has in a recent statement in New Delhi, stated that India should increasingly look for commercial borrowing abroad. Further comment is unnecessary.

The basic fallacy of the present industrial policy is the belief that the dismantling of the regulatory measures in the industrial sector would automatically lead to the setting up of export-oriented industries which enjoy competitive advantage. In the first place, one problem in India has been the inadequacy of infrastructure, which in turn is related to the inadequacy of public and private investment in the past. The removal of these structural weaknesses will not be effected by an ostrich-like attitude. Secondly, the market for industrial products in India, based on the demand-impulse generated by the highly skewed distribution of income has promoted the manufacture of items in which India does not enjoy any special comparative advantage. It is only when industries are set up on the basis of long-term comparative advantage, and made more competitive by the removal of diverse structural rigidities in the economy, when industries are set up on the basis of a large, broad-based home demand, that exports would increase automatically.

The Implication of Technology Import Policy

The import of technology is a major element in the strategy of development now being followed, and foreign collaboration agreements are being encouraged with gusto, as a means of modernization of our production methods, and making our industry competitive. No one today would deny the need for technology import, but one has to examine carefully (a) the reasons for technology import in the first place, (b) the record of absorption of technology, and (c) the sectors into which imported technology is being inducted. To take the last question first, we have to ask, is it technology which would help the common man? Would it reduce the drudgery of the masses and increase their income? Or, does it cater to the needs of only a few? Secondly, is it technology which would lead to a broad-based manufacturing process, or is it something that would lead to both large-scale displacement of labour and increased concentration of ownership? For instance, cars are being assembled in Japan today by robots, and in the U S A, the latest technology is rapidly eliminating both small farmers and small businesses.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Can we afford such large-scale displacement of labour and increased concentration? Thirdly, would the imported technology really lower over-all costs, by enabling us to produce basic goods more cheaply, or is it something that would lead to the development of isolated pockets of industrial excellence, without any fall-out benefits? There is animated talk in official circles about the new information technology. How precisely are we going to use this technology? Is it to be used to speed up our education process, or is it to be used merely to provide soporific entertainment to the masses so as to divert their attention, or again, to project the image of the powers that be?

That the policy pursued with regard to development and import of technology is *ad hoc*, unplanned and contrary to avowed objectives of policy would be clear from the example of the automobile industry. In a country which is desperately poor, there was no justification in the first place for allowing the assembly and later manufacture of three different models of cars to cater primarily to a narrow domestic market. Economies of scale could not be exploited through such policy, and manufacturers proved too timorous to venture into export markets with an aggressive policy of forward-looking investment and market penetration. Then came the official concern for modernizing the industry. This was used as an excuse to reverse the policy of keeping out foreign control from the public sector by allowing Suzuki to acquire control of the ill-advised Maruti project.

The current policy obviously stems from the obsession to make a success of the Maruti car. In the guise of developing a fuel-efficient car, as of now, virtually the entire car is being imported in a knocked-down condition, and assembled in India with only a few indigenous parts. This is in the name of producing a cheap, fuel-efficient car. This is essentially a fraud, because almost a wholly imported car is now being allowed to be sold as a product of Indian manufacture, and in order to make it cheap, import and excise duty rates have been lowered significantly. Several questions arise in this connection. First, could the existing indigenous cars not have been made cheaper by reducing the duty on them? And could they not have been forced—say, through permission to import fuel efficient engines—to produce more fuel efficient cars? Secondly, for whose benefit—i.e., for which class of people—is this enormous cost, both in investment terms and in terms of foreign exchange outgo, being incurred by the country? Thirdly, what is the backward linkage, and therefore, the incidental benefit of the Maruti? Unfortunately, in the case of the Maruti—reportedly owing to pressure from the Japanese collaborators—there has been little or no development of ancillary industries. Indeed, ancillarisation is not even talked about.

As a direct consequence of the policy regarding Maruti, and as a result of the broad-banding of industries for the purpose of industrial licensing (applicable for the automobile industry) the existing manufacturers have had to be permitted to import new engines, body panels—in fact, a much higher percentage of components than in the past—and a number of other units are now reportedly proposing to manufacture automobiles. The Tatas are supposed to produce a car with Japanese collaboration. Inevitably, the

Maruti approach would be followed, and large-scale imports would result, with only promises of progressive indigenisation. The ironical fact is that the programme of passenger cars has never been a part of the Plan programme. The investment on Maruti has likewise never been part of the approved Plan. As a result of the new policy of "Opening up" of the economy, many existing manufacturers of components are now left without orders, so that there is a reduction rather than an increase in employment. As the *Statesmen* (Calcutta) of 21 August 1985 states, "the recent spate of Japanese tie-ups in the Indian automobile industry have adversely affected the innumerable small foundries. Collaborators' insistence on imports of castings from Japan have left them with a heavy inventory burden." The technology import policy has in effect led to partial de-industrialization, and the net effect has been only to provide the Indian elite with a choice of cars from among a number of imported models.

In the electronics industry, a similar 'import-led growth' policy is being followed.³ There has been a deluge of foreign collaborations in this sector. Almost the entire colour TV set is now imported and assembled here. Even for black and white TV sets, the import of components has gone up as a result of many new units starting production with the help of foreign collaboration. The earlier ban on the use of foreign brand names is being openly or covertly violated. Similar developments are occurring in the field of computers, calculators, etc. Again, this policy is justified by past failures. But unlike the South Koreans, who had been earlier derided officially by powerful forces in the Electronics Commission and are now being lauded in all quarters, neither the Government nor private manufacturers are investing enough and in the right areas to build vital backward linkages. The policies being pursued now are unlikely to increase our competitiveness abroad—one of the stated objectives of policy.

Even the survival of many of these industries—being set up with foreign collaboration or supposedly being upgraded technologically—cannot be assured, partly because they will produce, in general, elitist consumption items, and the market in India is not large enough to fully exploit economies of scale for them. Again, these industries cannot survive if imports of the final products are allowed. Would the Maruti survive if fully built-up cars are allowed to be imported at the same rate of duty as paid by Maruti for components?

In most public discussions, one vital aspect of technology import is underplayed. This is our capacity to bargain for, and absorb, foreign technology. Comparisons with China and South Korea, two countries which are supposed to have done very well by opening their doors to foreign capital and technology, will help make the point clearer. China's rate of industrial growth in the past has been at least twice as high as that of India and she had built up a sophisticated industrial structure in practically all fields of manufacture. People who talk about China opening her doors to Western countries now, try to forget this past, and also brush away the fact that even to borrow technology on favourable terms you need to be prepared. In this respect

China is far better prepared than India. She can afford to say, "If you don't like our terms, go away, we'll do it ourselves." There are, indeed, quite a number of instances, in 1980 in particular, when finding that her foreign exchange commitments were much larger than she was prepared to accept, China simply cancelled foreign contracts one after the other. Even now, in the midst of this phase of unbolted doors, she conducts the toughest bargaining imaginable when preparing a technological contract. Her attitude to foreign suppliers of technology is incomparably harder than what the Indian Government or the Indian corporate sector can even dream of adopting. That is the difference between China and India. There are many other differences between China and India. There are many other differences—in the choice of the products in which they decide to collaborate, in the choice of the method they would like to absorb etc.,—but that would take us too far.

South Korea offers a different example. It has been greatly helped by both Japanese and American transnationals and by the huge inflow of capital, primarily commercial, supporting her industrialization. But at the same time, for various historical reasons, South Korea has also been able to develop a small group of very tough native entrepreneurs who have now formed huge trading companies in their own right. From this position of strength they can bargain on very favourable terms even with large multinationals like the General Motors.

Moreover, perhaps because of its small size and cohesiveness, the real nationalistic element that South Korea can put into its planning and economic policy far outdistances the real national element in our economic policy. This might sound paradoxical in view of the fact that South Korea continues to depend a lot on the American Government and multinationals, but it is true and we need to be aware of it. The current policy places a good deal of faith in multinationals transferring 'high technology' to India. So one has to begin from the first principle. A multi-national will transfer technology to another country if that is the most profitable option for it. It has several options: it can sell the product, it can invest in a subsidiary, it can set up a partnership on unequal terms providing the local partner nothing except some equipment and constructional expertise. Only the last option is to sell technology in any real sense.

There are studies which show that there is a difference in the bargaining strength between the large multinationals and poor countries like India which cannot really act as a united nation in this matter, and that they are not even in a position to absorb the frontier technology if it is at all supplied. For that requires a level of development and sophistication in many areas which developing countries simply do not possess. Let us take a concrete example. If a large multinational manufacturing aircraft were to try and market aircraft for private persons in India, how many buyers would there be and why should such a company set up a production unit here or transfer technology? It would prefer to sell its aircraft outright. In other words, our foreign partners have only their interests in mind and hence it is imperative to keep a

careful watch on the real costs/benefits of all proposed technology transfer deals to safeguard our interests

Therefore, one has to be realistic. One has to critically examine the way trade in technology is actually done and face the fact that under present conditions no large transnational is going to sell technology to us on very favourable terms. If the Third World countries had been able to put up a united front things would have been different. But narrow, divergent interests have prevented such a consolidation. Why bring in the heterogeneous Third World? Even our own nationalized public sector has failed to act unitedly against multinationals. In this state of affairs we have to remember the old adage "Buyers must be careful".⁴

The New Textile Policy

Let us now look at the policy relating to a totally different type of industry, based on a large home demand and essentially on domestically available raw materials, namely, the textile industry. This industry is the single largest provider of employment in the country. In the new textile policy, the policy of fibre flexibility introduced recently implies that a few existing, well-established firms would be placed in a most advantageous position. In fact, the policy appears to be tailor-made for one particular favoured firm. More significantly, the multi-fibre policy does not improve the competitiveness of Indian textiles abroad because of the disadvantage India has in the production of man-made (synthetic) fibres. On the other hand, the permission of expansion of the weaving capacity in the organised sector is likely to be a crushing blow to the unorganized weaving sector. Indeed, the fact that the entire production of controlled cloth is to be transferred to the handloom sector by the end of the Seventh Plan implies that a responsibility which the mill sector has so long "evaded" is now to be passed on as a millstone around the neck of the handloom sector. Thus, *in lieu* of the earlier encouragement given to the handloom sector through the policy of reservation of certain categories of cloth production, hereafter, items of high unit value realisation will be produced by the organised mill sector, while the production of unremunerative controlled cloth would be the burden of the handloom sector.

Even the powerloom sector appears today to have been hard hit by the combination of fiscal and licensing policies. The *Calcutta Statesman* of September 17, 1985 reports that the "new textile policy announcement some time ago has dealt a stunning blow to the art silk industry of Surat". It goes on to add that the "volume of production by the industry that consists of about 1.20 lakh powerlooms operating day and night has dropped by 45 percent and there are fears that the crisis will deepen rapidly."

The new textile policy makes the explicit statement that organised factory units would be allowed to contract capacities, or even to order the closure of a unit. The policy makers seem to be aware that the new policy would lead to the closure of some units. The new policy would be very likely to lead to the cornering of the market by a few large firms. The recent reduc-

tions in the import/excise duties on synthetic fibres are intended to boost the demand for man-made and for mixed fabrics, in which only a few units specialize. The fact that raw cotton output this year has reached a record level of 93 lakh bales and cotton prices are falling does not bother the policy-maker. With the fall in the price of cotton, the reduction in the fiscal levies on synthetic/mixed fabrics may be expected to sustain and boost the demand for the products of only a few large units, specializing in the production of blended fabrics in which we do not have and cannot hope to have export competitiveness. The policy would not therefore lead to any break-through in exports. The area in which India does have a comparative advantage, namely cotton, has been totally ignored. The undependable quality of Indian cotton has been a major drawback in the way of the production of good-quality fabrics in the past, but there is no emphasis in the new policy on the improvement of the ginning of raw cotton, and no attempt to otherwise encourage the production of better cotton varieties. In fact, the multifibre policy is likely to prove a damper to the demand for cotton, which could affect cotton production, and therefore, the long-term viability of the textile export programme.

The demand for textiles in India is essentially of three types: one highly elitist, a second, required by the poorer sections consisting mainly of the standard or coarser varieties of cloth—some of it very colourful (as in Rajasthan), and a third consisting increasingly of mixed fabrics and wash-and-wear type of materials required by the urban and semi-urban populace. Since India has an advantage in the matter of cotton, if the quality of cotton can be up-graded, the quality of mill cloth for the second category can be improved. It so happens that Indian exports of cloth are also predominantly of this category. (The export of apparel is a different story where the added value is considerable, since India has cheap labour, giving a competitive edge to exports.) Hence, the freeing of the mill sector from its obligation to produce controlled varieties of cloth is likely, if anything, to reduce the aggregate output of mill cloth. The reason is that in terms of quantities, neither the elitist demand nor the demand for mixed fabrics is likely to increase more than the decline in the demand for ordinary varieties of mill cloth. Also, the increasing use of synthetic/mixed fabrics (which are more long lasting) is likely to reduce the total demand for cloth, in terms of quantities. Hence, whatever else the present textile policy may achieve, it is unlikely to result in any increase in exports of mill cloth.

The Public Sector

Another aspect of the Government's industrial policy concerns its approach to the public sector. Of late, it has become popular in official quarters to indulge in casual, unrestrained and ill-informed denigration of the public sector. The public sector is widely and openly criticised as inefficient, and the private sector is eulogized for its efficiency. There is even some talk of privatization of the public sector; and very recently, it has been decided that three sick sugar mills which have been nursed back to a state of health after

Government take-over, would be handed back to the earlier owners. This is rather paradoxical. It may be recalled that the economy is being opened up precisely because the Indian corporate sector has been felt to be inefficient and sluggish (because of the lack of competition). Moreover, a very large number of private sector units have had to be taken over by Government owing to endemic sickness. Entire industries are today sick, viz., jute mills, mini steel plants, many general engineering industries, many chemical and pharmaceutical units, a large part of the textile industry, many sugar units quite a few glass and ceramic units and so on, the list is almost unending. Yet, the private sector is now held to be efficient, and the public sector otherwise, and policy decisions taken solely on that premise.

The relative performance of the public and private sectors needs to be analyzed in proper perspective. Also, the problems and constraints before the public sector should also be examined with a view to tackling those. Unfortunately, the public sector manager today enjoys no freedom, he has responsibility without any power. Bureaucratic control and political interference are endemic. The chief executive of the Indian Iron and Steel Company has been changed nearly a dozen times since take-over/nationalization—a turnover of once every year—which is hardly conducive to good management. Appointments to public sector posts have become a matter of political patronage. Distant control of the Ministries/Departments of Government on even matters such as purchases or sales hamper operations. Policy decisions are again concentrated at the Ministry/Department. A few public sector units which had, in the earlier days, been able to set up their own separate traditions of functioning have shown how they are even superior to their private sector counterparts in the same industry. A comparison between, say, the HMT and private sector machine tool units, or between the BHEL and the AVB, would clearly illustrate this point.

Comparison is frequently made between the Tatas and public sector steel plants. What is not always realized is that the public sector steel plants were not free to choose their product-mix; they were *required* by Government to produce low value items (in high demand) in the public interest. The Tatas have long since given up the production of pig iron for sale to foundries, the entire burden falls on the public sector plants. In terms of operating efficiency—physical norms of capacity utilization and efficiency in the use of materials and energy—the Bhilai Steel Plant is no worse than the TISCO, and Bokaro has a more efficient energy balance. If they do not make as much profit as the TISCO, this is because of other policy constraints which we need not go into here. The Government has consistently denied even normal replacement of equipment at the Durgapur Steel Plant, let alone allow its modernization, and glib comparisons are made of capacity utilization at the DSP *vis-a-vis* other plants.⁵

There is another aspect which is more crucial. The comparison generally made is in terms of the narrow commercial angle i.e., in terms of return on capital. An alternative calculation can and should be made from a wider social angle i.e., the contribution made by a unit to the country's national

product (Dholakia, 1978) ⁶ The total benefit to the economy as a whole accruing from any production process is represented by the sum of related factor incomes generated from it i.e., the sum of rent, wages, and salaries, interest and profit. The conventional profitability criterion focusses attention only on the last of these four items and ignores the first three types of income flows. But the total gain to the economy from a production process is the sum of all four. Dholakia, therefore, constructs a time series of overall factor productivity of the public sector and the private sector separately from 1960-61 to 1975-76. The results are shown below :

Table-I
Total factor productivity of private and public sectors in India

	Private Sector	Public Sector
1960-1961	100	100
1967-1968	92.33	118.14
1975-1976	102.73	188.79

SOURCE: Dholakia (1978)

Thus, it would seem that in terms of total factor productivity the public sector performed far better than the private sector. What Dholakia's study indicates is that the superior performance of the private sector is far from established if one considers the relative performance of the two sectors from a wider social angle.

One of the results of the present Government approach to public sector units is that potentially efficient units like, for instance, the Indian Iron & Steel Company, are allowed to die by denying them funds for modernization and expansion, even while large sums are expended to set up inefficient new units, which in due course would be allowed to languish once they have been completed with foreign assistance for the import of plant and equipment. It is understood that an expert Government study on the steel industry had recently found that Burnpur and Durgapur have an advantage over other steel plants, from the angle of location. And yet, these two plants have suffered the maximum neglect in respect of plant replacement and modernization. The IISCO is now reported to be on the verge of closure even while large investments are made for the setting up of a new plant at Visakhapatnam, and there are reports of yet another new unit—the Neelachal Steel Plant—being set up. If the capital servicing cost alone per tonne of steel at the VSL works out to the present market price of steel, and if, therefore, the VSL loses heavily, would the plant managers be to blame? Is it a necessary weakness of the public sector? The focus appears to be on the placement of import orders for equipment and the import of foreign know-how, as if import of plant and of technology—which is frequently “tied” and therefore not the best—would

automatically make for viability and growth of these units

In the past the Government had grossly neglected the task of absorbing the technology imported into the public sector and had hamstrung the public sector in its bargaining with foreign suppliers of technology. What could have been a potential source of strength for the public sector, viz., the existence of a large number of units capable of throwing up new ideas and implementing R & D projects to adapt borrowed technology and invent methods, had been turned into a weakness through the deliberate fragmentation of efforts and authority.⁷ This mistake is to be compounded several fold now in the name of efficiency or, sometimes, in a burst of barefaced confession of failure, expediency.

We have examined only a few instances of the effect of technology import, and of the liberalization of industrial and import policies. But the illustrations chosen are typical. They indicate that the areas where the import of technology is really required in the economy have not been carefully thought out. Nor have the implications of the measures adopted been examined carefully. What is happening is essentially *ad hoc*, based on the recommendations of certain pressure groups. The policy changes appear to be totally unconnected with the plan programme. The present combination of policies is likely, in fact, to lead to de-industrialization in that many existing industries are likely to be wiped out, not because of any inherent long term comparative disadvantage but because of unplanned and *ad hoc* changes in import policy, while any new activity likely to arise as a result of the policy would not create enough employment even to offset the unemployment directly caused by the closure of industries through unplanned imports.

The process of technology import, the way it is being permitted, is also likely to lead to increased 'concentration', by the weeding out of small producers, and an accentuation of the inequality in the distribution of income. The process set in motion is *not* likely to lead to the growth of over-all industrial output and employment, and *not* likely to improve exports.

We would like to repeat the warnings given by many economists about the danger of India walking into a debt trap which is likely to follow if the present policies continue to be pursued. Such a possibility will mean not only the loss of economic sovereignty by the Indian Government, it is likely to lead to a long-term crisis because of the ever-present threat of capital flight. In Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Argentina, the huge official debt is further swollen by very large flights of private capital (amounting in the case of Mexico to more than U S \$32.7 billion over the period 1974-83).⁸ Non-resident Indians and many resident Indians have already taken a considerable volume of capital out of India. There is a real danger that if India walks into a massive international debt, her Government will be blackmailed not only by TNC banks, other TNCs, but also by her new found NRI investors as also wealthy citizens who know of ways to take their capital out of the country. This threat can, in the event we walk into the debt-trap, compromise our very ability to adopt a policy of self reliance and an independent foreign policy.

It is not yet too late to change the direction of our industrial and technology policy, on the basis of long term plan objectives, and long term international competitiveness

- 1 See, in this connection, A K Bagchi 'Hijacking the Indian Economy', *The Herald Review*, 5-11 May 1985
- 2 See OECD *Economic Outlook*, Paris, OECD, June 1985, see also Javati Ghosh's 'Problems of adjustment and growth in the world economy', *Economic and Political Weekly* 27 July, 1985
- 3 The phrase 'import-led growth' was used by S Gomulka to characterize Poland's growth strategy in the 1970s See S Gomulka 'Growth in the import of technology Poland 1971-1980', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 2 (2) June, 1978
- 4 Some paragraphs in this part have been taken from an interview between A K Bagchi and S Dasgupta 'Technology transfer A confession of failure' *Business Standard*, 3 August 1985
- 5 See in this connection, A Ghosh 'Productivity, and efficiency in manufacturing industries Some case studies, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual No 1984
- 6 Dholakia, B H 'Relative performance of public and private manufacturing enterprises in India-total factor productivity approach', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1978
- 7 See in this connection A K Bagchi 'Public sector industry and the quest for self-reliance in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number 1982
- 8 G W Smith and J T Cuddington (eds) *International Debt and the Developing countries* Washington, D C The World Bank 1985, quoted as reported in *The World Bank Research News*, Summer 1985

UTSA PATNAIK *

*Profit-Inflation, Poverty and Employment
in the Context of Capitalist Development*

A NUMBER of poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes were taken up for implementation by the Government in the Sixth Plan period. These include the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) which absorbed the food-for-work programme, schemes such as the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programmes (RLEGP) launched in late 1983, and the Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM). The official estimate of persons in poverty in 1979-80 was 48 per cent on average, with 50 per cent being below the poverty-line in rural areas and 38 per cent in urban areas. The declared objective was to bring this down to 30 per cent by 1984-85. In the mid-term Appraisal of the Sixth Plan it was claimed, on the basis of a number of somewhat dubious assumptions, that under the impact of IRDP and NREP the poverty percentage had come down to 41.5 within the first two years of the Plan. At present after two years of bumper harvests optimism is high and it is being widely (though so far unofficially) broadcast that the percentage of people in poverty has declined to below 30 per cent.

Such a drastic decline in poverty in a mere five years would certainly constitute a most remarkable, indeed incredible achievement of the poverty alleviation and employment generation programmes, to which such successful performance is being attributed, given the fact that the total outlay on all these programmes taken together during the Sixth Plan period did not exceed Rs 3500 crores (Rs 1000 crores under NREP, Rs 1500 crores under IRDP, excluding the repayable loan component, Rs 600 crores under RLEGP and the balance distributed over other schemes). With an average population in poverty of at least 250 million in rural areas, the per capita outlay works out to a mere Rs 28 per annum—an inconsiderable, even an absurd sum on any criterion.

It must be remembered that of all the schemes, NREP and RLEGP generate incomes in the hands of the beneficiaries only during the period of their operation and do not permanently improve the labourer's income-earning capacity. only the IRDP is designed to add to productive assets. An

idea or the minuscule nature of outlays on employment generation so far may be had from the fact that annual export subsidies to a handful of enterprises alone exceeds five times over the annual outlays of NREP, supposed to benefit a population of 400 lakh households

While the Seventh Plan outlays have not been finalised at the time of writing, it is estimated that the minimum funds required for maintaining IRDP alone at the existing level taking into account inflation and leakages would be of the order of Rs 5000 crores, while if the scope of the programmes is to be widened the resources required would be correspondingly larger. Similarly the maintenance of NREP, RLEGP (as well as TRYSEM) at even the existing levels in terms of person-days of employment generated, would entail a stepping-up of money outlays yielding a minimum grand total of the order of Rs 8000 to Rs 10000 crores over the Seventh Plan period.¹

The prospects for the expansion and even the maintenance in real terms of the present employment generating programmes, minuscule as they are, appear to be bleak in the light of the resource-crisis of the State which is beginning to manifest itself with the emergence of the 'new economic policy' whose main contours are becoming clearer over time. If the 1985 Budget, the measures of delicensing and import liberalisation and the new textile policy are all considered together, the conclusion becomes inescapable that the Government has opted for and is quite consistently implementing a policy of promoting a profit-inflation for private enterprise on the none-too-valid assumption that this will provide the main engine of accumulation and growth. Rates of corporate and individual direct taxation have been slashed in the 1985 Budget, the ceiling on assets for defining a monopoly under MRTP raised five times over, while simultaneously, import-liberalisation and capacity delicensing combined with an open-door policy to foreign capital entering collaboration agreements, comprise a package designed to allow industry to invest without hindrance in the high-profit areas. These expanding-demand and high-profit areas today are constituted by the commodities demanded by the top two deciles of the Indian population ranked by expenditure on consumption. At the same time, the resource-squeeze faced by the State, arising from the slashing of direct tax revenues and the continuing large subsidies (to industry, on food and fertilizers), can only partly be countered by widening the scope of indirect taxation, since this already provides 85 per cent of tax revenues. Recourse is therefore taken to increased credit-financing, of which deficit financing in the narrow sense forms only a part.² We will return to the question of credit financing later. The inevitably rapid rate of inflation which will follow the expansion of credit financing (and which has begun already) is likely to worsen the real income position of the rural and urban poor further, while at the same time the mobilisation of resources for alleviating poverty becomes more difficult precisely in consequence of the fiscal measures under the 'new economic policy'.

The somewhat contemptuous relegation of the employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes to a low-priority, low-outlay position in

the Sixth Plan and their likely fate in the Seventh Plan, is indicative of two inter-related sets of perceptions about the nature and role of such programmes. The first is typified by the Prime Minister's response to a question on removing poverty, in which he argued to the effect that while poverty removal was very necessary, the problem was that unlike money spent in industry, money spent on such programmes tended to be largely unproductive.³ The tendency to regard such outlays as a kind of dole to the destitute, producing little or nothing by way of output (and perhaps 'necessary' only from the view point of the political imperatives of a one-man one-vote system) is certainly not confined to the P M, but is extremely widespread amongst economists. It is this perception which underlies the reported rejection by the Planning Commission of the suggestion that the right to work should be included as a fundamental right, on the ground that such an inclusion would imply providing employment to every unemployed person regardless of the cost.⁴ Yet this is a myopic perception, which does not recognise that underemployed labour is a valuable resource. An extensive discussion had taken place in the sixties in this country on the question of mobilising underemployed labour for capital formation projects, a discussion which merits revival today in the light of the continuing severity of the unemployment problem, and the fact that, with nearly 30 million tons of foodgrains stocks, objective conditions are unprecedentedly good for an all-out attack on poverty through employment of underemployed labour on capital formation projects on a large scale. As we have argued elsewhere,⁵ it is precisely through such mobilisation that a similarly labour-surplus agriculture like China's had experienced a near-doubling of the proportion of cultivated area under irrigation as well as successful implementation of large scale soil conservation, irrigation and afforestation projects.

The second set of perceptions which logically lead to employment generation and poverty alleviation outlays being regarded as a drain on the budget, arise from the following proposition: the green revolution's economic benefits, and the benefits of growth generally, automatically filter down to the rural poor, whose real income rises. Stronger versions of this proposition assert that not only has income distribution not worsened with growth especially in green revolution areas, but has either remain unchanged or has actually improved, in consequence there is an expansion of the rural market for manufactured goods, and no demand-constraint therefore inhibits Indian industrial expansion. Growth of labour demand in green revolution areas not only benefits local labour by raising real wages, but exercises a 'suction effect' on low-productivity rural labour elsewhere, inducing migration, as of Bihari labour to Punjab. Two types of data are cited in support of these propositions: survey data covering a cross-section of rural households which show that adoption of green revolution technology is undertaken by some households in every acreage-group of holdings,⁶ and the NSS consumption data, from which conclusions about income distribution are sought to be drawn.⁷ (The only direct and reliable data on the earnings of a social class, namely the results of the All-India Rural Labour

Enquiries 1963-64 and 1974-75, are sedulously ignored by all advocates of the above propositions. These show a drastic decline in the level of real earnings of rural labour over the period.) Whatever the subjective predilections of its individual advocates might be on the poverty-alleviation question, the logical implications of the 'growth benefits automatically percolate down' thesis is that the emphasis should be on generalising the green revolution and not on State-financed employment creation. Growth is reducing poverty anyway so at best the employment programmes are seen as a supplementary measure akin to famine relief, in drought prone areas not yet touched by green revolution.

It is necessary to take up for critical consideration both the validity of the logical argument underlying the 'automatic percolation' thesis, as well as the way in which empirical support is sought to be adduced for the thesis. On the first question, it seems to us that the basic methodological problem with all arguments put forward on 'automatic trickling-down of benefits' and 'no worsening of income distribution', is that they are not located within any overall theory of macroeconomic trends. The arguments are confined to the empiricist level of asserting that 'the data' say such and such, and show little or no awareness of the fact that the same data can with validity say quite the opposite with a reformulation of the theoretical problematic. We will spell this out below by outlining briefly our own perception of the salient macroeconomic trends bearing on the poverty question.

Implications of Profit Inflation

From the second half of the Second Plan period, notably the year 1958-59, the Indian economy has experienced virtually uninterrupted inflation in all commodity prices, but with a higher than average rate of inflation in primary sector prices. The index of wholesale prices today (1984-85) is six times higher compared to 1960-61. This may represent a moderate rate of inflation compared to that in many Latin American countries, but it is an unprecedented rate of inflation relative to the history of the Indian economy excluding War periods. VKRV Rao's calculation of implicit price deflators from the official series on money and real values on NDP indicate that the implicit deflator for the primary sector during the entire period 1950-51 to 1979-80 grew at a compound rate of 5.90 per cent annually compared to 4.60 per cent and 3.50 per cent in the secondary and tertiary sectors respectively, giving an overall growth rate of 4.90 per cent. "As it is the NDP at current prices which matters as far as the purchasing power in money terms is concerned, it is the primary sector which has gained the most (or lost the least) from the inflation which has accompanied the growth of real NDP during this period."⁸ To be more accurate, it is the commodity-sellers in each sector who have gained from inflation, at a somewhat faster rate in the primary sector, but also in other sectors. There are marked differences in the sub-period trends making up the overall picture. 1952-53 to 1958-59 saw lower prices than in the base year following the Korean war boom, 1959-60 to 1974-75 saw a rapid inflation with primary sector prices rising at the fastest rate, while

the last decade has seen a similar order of inflation but with secondary sector prices rising at the fastest rate

The reasons for the overall inflation from the latter half of the second Plan period lie proximately in the structure and sources of Plan financing, and ultimately in the class nature of the State. The noted Polish economist Michal Kalecki has given us a perceptive analysis of the post-Independence thrust of planned development, marked for the first time in India's modern history by a large increase in State expenditures and by deficit budgets. Writings and lecturing in Delhi during the mid-fifties when prices were still falling from the Korean war boom years, Kalecki warned that inflationary pressures were bound to emerge strongly in an India-type mixed economy undertaking large scale development expenditures, owing primarily to the class character of the State. In a series of rather similar models he showed that for a non-inflationary growth path initiated by State investment, it was necessary that agricultural production should grow at a commensurate rate and that investible resources should be raised through direct taxation of property incomes and indirect taxation of luxuries. The State however would find it politically difficult either to tax its own constituents, the landlords and capitalists, to the required extent, or remove completely the fetters of landlordism on output growth in rural areas. The large scale investment and other outlays under the Plans would generate a rapid expansion in the demand for necessities, being initially in areas of production with a high unskilled labour component, while an unreformed agrarian structure would be unable to supply the main necessity, foodgrains, at the required rate, leading to inflation in foodgrains prices in the first instance followed by inflation in prices of manufactured necessities. A substantial part of the Plan expenditures would be financed ultimately out of the forced savings of the rural and urban poor—the wage earners and fixed salary earners—who would experience with inflation either a cut in real incomes, or a slower than average rise in real incomes, while simultaneously the landlords and capitalists monopolising commodity sales, would enjoy a profit inflation.

Kalecki's theoretical scenario corresponds remarkably closely to the actual pattern of Plan financing and output expansion in the last quarter-century, with the caveat that not only prices, but direct transfers in the Budget itself have helped to skew income distribution. Far from taxing property incomes or luxury consumption alone, progressively greater reliance has been placed by Government on a combination of indirect taxes on necessities (all indirect taxes will contribute nearly 90 per cent of tax revenues after the 1985 budget), credit financing, and external aid. An additional important factor from the mid-sixties has been the setting of administered prices of foodgrains by the APC, followed by the practice in recent years of announcing pre-Budget hikes in the administered prices of not only the traditional public utility services but also of steel, cement etc.

It has been argued cogently that the reliance on credit-financed expenditures by the State as opposed to tax-financed expenditures, have the effect, through commodity price inflation, of transferring income to the capitalists

and hence of raising the private sector's share of total surplus in the economy, at the expense of the share of the State. In credit finance would be included not only 'deficit finance' in the excessively narrow sense used in our country, but also Government's borrowing from the commercial banks, which there is little reason to suppose is less inflationary than its borrowing from the RBI. Profit accruing to the capitalists and held as money amounts to their 'lending' to the Government; it is a worse alternative to tax-financed expenditures, which at least transfer resources for investment directly to the State, albeit at the expense of the growth of consumption of the mass of the people.¹⁰ Interestingly, we find that a rather similar argument was put forward by Keynes in his *Treatise (The Applied Theory of Money)*, but in the context of war financing—which, in its requirement of a sudden stepping-up of the rate of investment, is in fact analytically similar to the problem of planned development financing. Keynes was, of course, looking at the matter from the viewpoint of the capitalist State.

Thus, talking of the large increase in investment in arms entailed by the First World War, Keynes pointed out that 'it exceeded the maximum possible amount of voluntary saving which one could expect', and therefore 'forced transferences of purchasing power in some shape or form were a necessary condition of investment in the materials of war on the desired scale'. Logically such a forced transfer could take place through one or more of the following methods: first, through taxation of incomes, second through a cut in money wages, and third, through a faster rate of rise in prices relative to that in money wages. If the first method was used, 'the taxation would have had to be aimed directly at the relatively poor, since it was above all their consumption in view of its aggregate magnitude, which had somehow or the other to be reduced'. This method was politically difficult, as was the lowering of money wages directly. Keynes was led to conclude that 'to allow prices to rise by permitting a profit inflation is, in time of war, both inevitable and wise'. So far, this is Keynes's well-known advocacy of the taking advantage of 'money illusion' on the part of workers to cut their real consumption through a profit inflation, without the workers realising the game of the State—but and this is the important point—Keynes also advocated high taxation of profits at the same time. 'It is expedient to use entrepreneurs as collecting agents. But let them be agents and not principals. Having adopted for quite good reasons a policy which pours the booty into their laps, let us be sure they hand it over in the form of taxes, and that they are not enabled to obtain a claim over the future income of the community by being allowed to 'lend' to the State what has thus accrued to them. *To let prices rise relatively to earnings and then tax entrepreneurs to the utmost is the right procedure for 'virtuous' war finance. For high taxation of profits and of incomes above the exemption limit is not a substitute for profit inflation but an adjunct of it*¹¹ (Emphasis added).

In India over the last quarter-century, a policy of profit inflation has indeed poured 'the booty' into the laps of the manufacturing capitalists and the rural landlord-capitalists monopolising commodity sales, thus restricting the rate of growth of mass consumption. But while the desirability of tax-

ing profits was in principle accepted in the past, in the last few years a gradual shift has taken place, with a progressive, shame-faced reduction of property-income taxes culminating in the new policy embodied in the 1985 Budget, which now openly abandons 'virtuous' financing for the vicious course of giving up the State's claim, on the specious argument that it has been unable to enforce tax compliance in the past. The refusal to consider the imposition of an agricultural holdings tax to tap the rural surplus, combined with the slashing of corporate and individual taxes, means that the surplus wrested from the workers is being distributed with both hands to the private property owners, both through profit inflation following credit-financing and through their exemption from the burden of financing public investment. The political economy behind this apparently suicidal course by the State is beyond the scope of this paper, for our purpose it is sufficient to note that the resource-crisis of the State is bound to worsen following its latest fiscal measures, thus constraining more stringently the options regarding expenditures on employment generation and poverty alleviation.

It is with these redistributive effects of inflation discussed by Keynes, that we are primarily concerned in any society where a minority of people monopolise commodity sales and a majority are sellers of only one type of commodity—labour power—it is crystal clear that inflation in prices of necessities would be in the interests of and constitute a profit inflation for the minority, while it would entail anything from real income decline (where labour is unorganised) to less than average real income rise (where labour is organised) for the majority working for wages. In rural areas, all available data indicate a high degree of concentration of cultivated area, asset value, output, and the commodity surplus entering the market, in the hands of a minority. In 1970-71, according to the Agricultural Census data the top one-eighth of all rural households ranked by area accounted for 53 per cent of total operated area while the RBI Debt and Investment Survey showed that the top one-eighth ranked by asset value had 53.5 per cent of total assets.¹² My estimate, now outdated, of marketable surplus for the year 1960-61, indicated that the top one-eighth of households ranked by area, accounted for 52 per cent of total output and 66.7 per cent of total gross commodity sales.¹³ Since, according to every single one of a large number of district level studies, carried out in the sixties and early seventies, adoption of green revolution technology was found to be positively associated with farm size, the top groups have added at a faster than average rate to their output and marketable surplus. On the basis of plausible assumptions, drawing upon such data as we have, on the differential rates of addition to output of different groups and their different marginal propensities to sell, we can hazard a rough guess-estimate that by today, with a doubling of total output and a 33 per cent rise in its monetisation, the top one-eighth accounts for at least 75 per cent of total marketable surplus. (This in turn is likely to underestimate the extent of concentration of commodity sales by the landlord-capitalists, for acreage group is not coterminous with social class). At the other pole, the lower six deciles of households ranked by area in 1960-61 had 8 per cent of

land operated, produced about 10 per cent of total output and contributed a mere 6 per cent of the aggregate marketable surplus¹⁴ It is not merely the fact that the benefits of inflation in primary sector prices accrued to the minority in proportion to their command over total sales simultaneously the majority, wholly or mainly dependent on performing wage-paid labour for the minority, lost out from the inflation, to a far greater extent than a few of them gained by virtue of selling commodities to a small extent, (nearly three-fifths of the lowest six deciles ranked by area are likely to be labourers, the remainder being mainly poor peasants) On deflating the money earnings data in the Rural Labour Enquiries of 1963-64 and 1974-75, by the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers, we find a drastic decline in real earnings over the period¹⁵, since prices came down slightly in the Emergency period, a smaller order of decline is observed if the indices for the two subsequent years (1975-76 and 1976-77) are applied to the 1974-75 money earnings data The burden of real indebtedness has predictably registered a rise over the same period Given the fact that rural labourers are almost entirely unorganised and the poor peasants are wholly so, a substantial unfavourable redistribution of incomes over social classes in rural areas is the logical consequence of inflation over the past quarter century

Since 1975 to date, while inflation has continued, it has been relatively more rapid in the secondary sector compared to the primary sector in short, in the course of overall profit inflation the balance with regard to the sectoral allocation of 'the booty', has tilted towards manufacturing, but this does not mean that the minority in rural areas have ceased to rake in their share of the booty only that the share is somewhat less munificent than before (With a wheat procurement price of Rs 152 per quintal in 1984-85 where 'costs' of production—including imputed interest on owned capital and imputed rent on owned land—was on average Rs 119 per quintal in Punjab, the rate of super-profit over and above average profit still works out to over 27 per cent on this 'cost') In the secondary and tertiary sectors the labour-force is extremely heterogeneous with respect to levels of skill and extent of organisation While organised labour and the Government-employed salariat is able to resist real income decline following inflation and even wrest in particular cases some real income rise, unorganised labour in small-scale industry and the tertiary sector—several times more numerous than organised labour—is likely to have lost out to a greater or lesser extent.

While on the above theoretical grounds we may confidently State that on unfavourable shift in income distribution over social classes must have accompanied inflation, and particularly so in rural areas where labour is almost wholly unorganised, it does not follow that 'the data' as they are collected and analysed at present, would necessarily show this The reason is that such data bearing on incomes, are generally not collected or analysed by social class It may be noted that the only source of earnings data for a social class, the Rural Labour Enquiries, do show real income decline and rise in indebtedness as earlier mentioned All other data bearing on the question comprise either survey data on holdings in rural areas aggregated by size of

holding, or NSS household consumption expenditure data aggregated by per capita expenditure levels from which estimates of poverty incidence are derived. We have elsewhere demonstrated¹⁶ that because the 'acreage' used in acreage grouping, is unadjusted for irrigation, fertility, multiple cropping, capital intensity of production methods, or family size, it is a very inaccurate indicator of the scale of operation or of the location of the household within the system of production relations (which are both related to the effective per capita resource endowment). We have shown that the large-scale, labour-hiring holdings are found in virtually every acreage group, though proportionately more, naturally, in the larger sizes, while conversely the households primarily hiring out their labour for wages are found as far as upto the 10-15 acre group. The actual extent of concentration of investment in new technology with the larger scale labour hiring holdings, cannot therefore be captured accurately by aggregation according to the crude physical farm size alone. (This applies equally to all our previous statements about the extent of land, assets, output and marketable surplus concentration when holdings are ranked by area - the extent of concentration by social class is understated). It is generally argued by the protagonists of the 'no worsening of income distribution' view, that since adoption of new technology is found to be undertaken by some households in every acreage-group, this shows that the benefits of green revolution are widely distributed and no worsening of 'income distribution' is indicated (implicitly, the distribution over acreage groups)¹⁷. But the fact of the matter is that it is the larger-scale, primarily hired-labour-based holdings within each physical acreage group which in fact are in the best financial position to do the adopting, hence the same findings are quite consistent with a worsening of distribution over social classes.

Empirical Evidence on Poverty and Income Distribution

For the last two decades, it has been the practice to use the NSS consumption expenditure data to estimate the percentage of people below the 'poverty line', which is defined in terms of an energy-norm derived from the estimated minimum nutritional requirement for maintaining working health. A few words on the concept of the 'poverty level' is necessary here. It is important to realise that since non-food necessities are excluded entirely from the definition of the "poverty line", the so-called 'poverty level' income does not in fact reflect the minimum cost of maintaining and reproducing labour-power, and should never be treated as such in default of proper measures. The fact that so many lakhs of people in our country nevertheless stagnate at below 'poverty-line' levels of consumption expenditure, when this 'poverty-line' itself is lower than the minimum cost of reproducing labour-power, is reflective of the fact that with prolonged deprivation, the human organism adjusts itself to suboptimal levels of metabolism and functional efficiency, expending less energy because less energy than required is available. The long-term stunting of physical growth and even in extreme cases, of mental development of deprived persons, higher susceptibility to disease and hence higher morbidity, are all the outcome of this 'ad-

justment'¹⁸ No undue jubilation need be felt if owing to good harvests, a certain proportion of the deprived are statistically shifted just over the 'poverty-line', for the effects of such long-term deprivation are not thereby reversed so easily

It is evident that being calculated in terms of an index defined in terms of food intake alone, the figure of persons below the 'poverty-line' will be highly sensitive to the state of the harvest—a bumper crop with a rise in per capita food availability will marginally shift a large number of people (especially the small peasants consuming out of their own output) over the 'line', while an indifferent one the next year will push them back again below the line. Even those who have crossed the 'poverty line' without regressing have not by any means crossed the Rubicon, they remain grossly poor and deprived, their mud huts remain mud huts, and their tattered clothing is not miraculously replaced. Thirdly, the 'poverty-line' is defined to take account of undernutrition, but not malnutrition, a rise in amount and energy equivalent of food consumed can be consistent with an unfavourable shift in the balance of nutrients, as appears to be the case in this country with the steady decline in the per capita availability of pulses, the main source of protein for the poor. In view of these facts it will be conceded that the term 'poverty-line' is a gross misnomer, for the spurious impression is conveyed by it that people shifting above the 'poverty-line' have in some sense ceased to be poor, when nothing could be farther from reality.

Let us return to the NSS consumption expenditure data which form the staple fare of arguments on 'income distribution'. These data again are not by social class, but are presented by monthly per capita expenditure levels of households—no comparison is directly possible with households ranked by area cultivated in rural areas. Since the number of consumers per household is not standardised, rather diverse households (with respect to income per worker) get lumped together in the same expenditure class, further it is not clear whether the definition of 'household' in terms of meals taken from a common kitchen, might not result in very poor persons (domestic servants, farm servants) being included in the 'households' of the rich. These data would then tend to understate the actual extent of consumption inequality. It is also widely recognised that the consumption of the very rich is under-represented in the NSS samples (since the very rich are very few, though their consumption is a substantial share of the aggregate), and that even when represented their consumption profiles are not adequately captured.

Time series analysis with these far from accurate or representative data present a host of formidable problems if inferences are to be drawn about what is happening to incomes—on which no direct data are available except for sub-sections of the population. First, in a number of studies only the distribution of nominal consumption expenditures over time is considered—this abstracts heroically from inflation and its differential impact on different classes.¹⁹ It is quite possible, when income distribution over social classes is actually worsening with a profit inflation, that the observed nominal consumption expenditure distribution improves or remains the same. This can

happen if, with necessities prices inflation, the poor step up their nominal expenditure by borrowing in order to maintain real expenditure, since the latter is already at or below the 'survival line' and cannot be cut further. They would have to step up nominal expenditure at a higher rate than the rich, owing to the predominance of food in their budgets, at the same time the rich, with already near saturated levels of consumption, would save their additional incomes almost entirely.

Secondly, in a number of studies which do try to estimate real consumption expenditures, insufficiently refined differential deflators are used which do not adequately capture the variations in the consumption baskets and prices faced by different groups. One of the more carefully worked estimates of real consumption expenditures has concluded that it remained unchanged during the period 1961-62 to 1973-74²⁰. Thirdly, logically untenable inferences about income distribution are sought to be drawn from analysis of consumption distribution: the authors doing this make no reference to the fact that one class of consumers, located mainly in the top deciles, have a high propensity to save out of income, while another class of consumers located mainly in the lowest deciles not only do not save but may dissave (vide Rural Labour Enquiry findings), income distribution is therefore not only likely to be much more skewed than consumption distribution, but over time, a constant degree of concentration in the latter can be consistent with increasing concentration of incomes²¹.

If the same consumption data which are being used to draw theoretically illegitimate conclusions on 'no worsening of income distribution', were to be aggregated by social class, they would give us an idea of the real shifts of the consumption pattern following from shifting income distribution. It may be noted that in some studies the proportion of total consumption expenditure going to 'food' shows a decline from around 46.5 per cent in 1970-72 to 38 per cent in 1981-82, while the proportion going to consumer durables shows a rise²². This is precisely what may be expected with worsening income distribution over social classes: as there is an income-shift to the labour-hiring classes and the upper salariat whose food consumption in real terms is already at near saturation level, the overall marginal propensity to spend on food will decline and so therefore will the average after a point. Since consumption expenditure is also concentrated (though naturally less so than land, assets and marketed surplus), with for example the top one-eighth of households ranked by area in rural areas in 1960-61 accounting for about 30 per cent of aggregate food expenditures, clearly income shifts to them will affect the pattern of total expenditure quite strongly. We may further note that the rate of savings in the economy has risen markedly, it reached at least 20 per cent of National Income by the late seventies,²³ and is expected to rise to 25 per cent in the course of the Seventh Plan. An unchanged real expenditure distribution on consumption (as established by Iyengar) combined with a rise in the 'savings rate', is fairly conclusively indicative of worsening distribution of income, quite apart from the theoretical considerations which independently lead us to infer that such a redistribution must have occurred.

The New strategy and the Alternative

The strategy of relying substantially on a profit inflation, has evidently 'succeeded' in curbing the rate of growth of mass incomes and mass consumption—for certain sections like rural labourers, to the extent of real earnings decline over certain periods—and has raised the savings rate in the economy. But the problem inherent in this same strategy, is that of an inadequately expanding mass market for consumption goods. The distribution of effective demand has shifted markedly towards the labour hiring classes and upper salariat whose burgeoning demand for import-intensive consumer durables—televisions, VCR, electronic products, motor cars and motor cycles—for synthetic textiles and for real estate and housing, has been determining for some years now the directions of profitable investment. In the past the spontaneous pulls of market demand operated against barriers imposed by an apparatus of controls designed—whatever their actual effectiveness—to restrict monopoly, conserve foreign exchange for essential productive imports and prevent the penetration of foreign capital. While a shamefaced, piecemeal shift away from these priorities has been visible in official policy since 1980, the decisive break with the past has come, undoubtedly, with the 1985 Budget. This along with a range of new policies including on monopolies and on foreign capital, clearly amount to an entirely new strategy of promoting elite consumption in the hope of generating growth (which is then expected to automatically 'trickle down' to the poor)

Where does the new economic policy leave the 300 million plus poor in the country who stubbornly remain poor despite sundry statistical attempts to push them above the 'poverty-line'? There can be no doubt that it is the lack of purchasing power, or the limitation of mass effective demand, with the poorer 50 per cent of the population, which accounts for the inability to absorb the bumper harvests of the last two years, the paradox of the widespread hunger among the rural poor in particular, combined with unprecedented stocks of now over 29 m tonnes of foodgrains with government—some of it rotting in monsoon weather for lack of adequate storage—is so striking that it has been noted by a number of observers of the economic scene. We may note that the per capita food availability and absorption in China today is somewhat over 50 per cent higher than in India; the argument sometimes heard, that we consume already as much as it is physically possible to consume, is simply not true. If the requisite purchasing power with the poor existed, a foodgrains output of at least 250 m tonnes today could be easily absorbed by the Indian population, as an output of 360m tonnes is absorbed by the Chinese population, which is a little less than one and half times India's (Of course, not the entire amount would be consumed directly as grain; some part would represent seed and some animal feed, converted in part again to protein-rich foods)²⁴

The obvious solution to our unemployment and poverty problem, which is at the same time a problem of inadequately growing mass effective demand for food and manufactured goods, is to use the unprecedented foodgrains stocks for an all-out attack on poverty by undertaking to supply

food against work for productive capital formation, especially in rural areas, on a massive scale. What is required is the formulation of schemes for harnessing unemployed and underemployed labour in irrigation, soil-conservation, terracing, afforestation, drinking water supply, rural industry and non-conventional energy projects. Instead of the present lackadaisical approach to 'poverty removal' as a system of doles to the destitute, from which petty functionaries and contractors filch at every level until only a fraction of the outlays reach the poor, what is required is a total restructuring of the administration of such employment generation schemes. Firstly, if the benefits of such schemes are to go to the rural poor comprising some 60 per cent of the rural population and not be siphoned off by the rural rich monopolising land and assets, the institutional framework of cooperation among the rural poor becomes essential, work for building community assets will only be undertaken with enthusiasm if it is perceived to benefit every more member of the community contributing the work, not merely in terms of the immediate wage payment alone but also in terms of the ownership of the productive asset created, be it reclaimed waste land, afforested hitherto barren hills, a factory processing fruit, or a source of drinking water. Secondly, the administration of the schemes has to be not 'from above', but 'from below', by evolving suitable institutions, or perhaps utilising existing institutions like the 'panchayats' provided these are made representative of the poor.

Such a large-scale programme of generating purchasing power in the hands of the poor and simultaneously giving a 'big push' to rural capital formation and essential social consumption with the assets created to be owned by the poor themselves, would require at least a five-fold expansion in the (unofficial) total Seventh Plan outlay of Rs 8000 to Rs 10000 crores. In short, an *annual* outlay of this order is required, which would imply a outlay per month of around Rs 30 per capita of the population in poverty.²⁵ Such a 'big push' in rural investment would generate employment and incomes, which through multiplier effects would rapidly expand the demand for manufactured products as well. The availability of large food stocks combined with excess capacity in textile mills implies that the inflationary potential of such a 'big push' can be kept to a minimum through a mix of suitable measures: payment of the remuneration to cooperative members largely in kind, extension of the public distribution of manufactured necessities (textiles, kerosene, etc.) against which the cash component can be exchanged, and a stepping up of direct taxation substantially to finance the outlays. An agricultural holdings tax on the top one eighth of households (who monopolise over half the total land and assets) would bring at least 10 million households into the net of direct taxation, while enhanced corporate taxation and taxation of urban professionals with punitive measures for default, would be required. In the long run, the consumption of the poor cannot be increased without curbing the luxury consumption of the rich.

Such a 'big push' in rural areas to put purchasing power in the hands of the poor and to enable them to own productive assets, would lead to a mass expansion of the demand for such wholly Indian-made goods as bicycles,

radios, watches, plastic goods, textiles (including synthetics) etc., which in its aggregate expansionary impact would exceed by far the very dubious expansionary effects of the present policy of encouraging the demand for heavily import-dependent electronic goods and other durable consumption goods on the part of the rich²⁶

A socially broad-based expansion of effective demand constituted by expanding purchasing power in the hands of the poor six deciles of our population, would not only lift the consumer goods manufacturing sector out of the doldrums, but this in turn would extend its linkage effects to the capital goods industries

The imperatives of economic rationality at this juncture are clear. Whether the balance of social forces in the country will ever permit the policies consistent with economic rationality remains to be seen

- 1 Reports in the *Economic Times*, Jan 10 and 26, 1985
- 2 It is well-known that the Indian definition of 'deficit-financing' which includes only Government's borrowing from the RBI and drawing down of cash balances, is narrower than that employed in many advanced countries, where government borrowing from commercial banks is included
- 3 P M's interview with school children, telecast by Doordarshan in late July 1985
- 4 Report in *Economic Times*, Jan 10, 1985
- 5 'Alternative Strategies of Agrarian Change in Relation to Development Finance in India and China' Paper presented to ICSSR Seminar on Marx, Schumpeter and Keynes New Delhi, January 1984
- 6 G S Bhalla 1979, 'Transfer of Technology and Agricultural Development in India' *EPW* Vol XIV Nos 51 & 52 December 1979
- 7 M S Ahluwalia, 1977 'Rural Poverty and Agricultural Performance in India' *Journal of Development Studies*. This is quoted by A V Desai 1984 'The Slow Rate of Industrialisation: A Second Look' *EPS* Annual Number Aug 1984. Also Desai 1981, 'Factors Underlying the Slow Growth of Indian Industry' *EPW* Annual Number March 1981, and I J Ahluwalia 1985, *Industrial Growth in India* (OUP)
- 8 V K R V Rao, *India's National Income 1950-1980* (Sage, 1983) p 20
- 9 Michal Kalecki (1) 'The Problem of Financing Economic Development' *Indian Economic Review*, 1955
(2) 'The Difference between the Crucial Economic Problems of Developed and Underdeveloped Non-Socialist Economies' in *Essays on Planning and Development* Centre for Research on Underdeveloped Economics, Warsaw 1958 (3) 'Problems of Financing Economic Development in a Mixed Economy' in *Essays on the Economic Growth of the Socialist and the Mixed Economy*, Cambridge 1972
- 10 Prabhat Patnaik 1980, 'Some Problems of Financing Public Investment in India' Paper and presented at the Humboldt University GDR, Sept 1980, See also P Patnaik, 'Market Question and Capitalist Development in India', *EPW* Annual No Aug 1984
- 11 J M Keynes *Treatise on Money (The Applied Theory of Money)* Vol VI, Collected Writings (Macmillan, CUP 1971), PP 152-157
- 12 Figures derived by constructing Lorenz curves from data in Report on Agricultural Census 1970-71, and RBI Rural Debt and Investment Survey Report, 1971

- 13 U Patnaik 1975, 'Contribution to Output and Marketable Surplus of Agricultural Products by Cultivating Groups in India', *EPW*, Vol X No 52 Dec 2-7
- 14 From 'Patnaik 1975 'Contribution to Output and Marketable Surplus', op cit
- 15 Introduction to U Patnaik & M Dingwaney (Eds) *Chains of Servitude* (Orient Longman 1985)
- 16 U Patnaik, *Peasant Class Differentiation A Study in Method with Reference to Haryana* (OUP), forthcoming 1985)
- 17 G S Bhalla, op cit
- 18 A Vaidynathan, 1985 "Food Consumption and Size of People-Some Indian Evidence" (*EPW* Review of Political Economy July 27) has summarised available data indicating a positive association between calorie intake and physical indicators like weight and a negative association of nutrition with morbidity
- 19 See studies in Bardhan and Srinivasan (Ed) *Poverty and Income Distribution in India* 1974, and M S Ahluwalia 1977 op cit
- 20 N S Iyengar and M H Suryanarayana 1984 'On Poverty Indicators' *EPW* June 2-9 The finding of real expenditure distribution which is unchanged contrasts with A Vaidyanathan 1974, 'Some Aspects of Inequalities in Living Standards in Rural India' in Bardhan and Srinivasan (Eds), *ibid*

C P CHANDRASEKHAR*

India's Balance of Payments Under The New Regime

THROUGH periodic statements by senior officials and confidential and public documents publicised through the press, the World Bank has sought to build a case unless India hastens the process of economic liberalisation, backed by a more open international trade environment, larger doses of commercial borrowing and enhanced concessional assistance from the industrialised world, one more possible developing country "model" could come a cropper. This case is built on three premises. First, that sustaining a higher rate of growth over the Seventh Plan (5 per cent for GNP and 8 per cent for industrial production) would require both, a better utilisation of domestic resources and markets and a major thrust into international markets. Second, that the better utilisation of domestic resources would require a decisive break from a past in which protection, regulation and the public sector were the main elements of India's development strategy to a future where the dismantling of controls and freer imports of capital and technology would help create an efficient, aggressive and internationally competitive industry. And third, that this process of liberalisation would lead in the medium term to a faster expansion in exports that would help finance larger imports, but would have to be aided with an adequate inflow of commercial loans and concessional assistance in the short run.

Going by recent changes in economic policy it is clear that this cause enjoys an adequate number of adherents in positions of power within the country. The new government has in a series of policy moves starting with this year's budget set off that decisive shift in economic policy perspective that the Bank has been arguing for. However, barring periodic references to the specific and non-replicable experiences of South Korea and Taiwan, little evidence has been mustered to argue for the viability of the new strategy. An attempt is made in this note to examine the possible impact of one aspect of this strategy, viz, the massive liberalisation on the trade front on India's beleaguered balance of payments. Besides assessing the implications of recent trends in India's balance of trade, the paper provides some projections that establish the near-impossibility of ensuring "structural adjustment" of the Bank-IMF kind and argue for greater controls over imports if India is to successfully tide over the crisis that has threatened to overwhelm her balance of payments ever since the second oil shock of 1979-80.

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The Background

When in the early 1970s the nations forming the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) massed their strength and drove up oil prices, they obviously altered the trade fortunes of the other nations in an interdependent world. OPEC surpluses had two rather divergent effects on the balance of payments of the less developed countries (LDCs), with the incidence of each varying across nations. First, since these surpluses were financed by substantially higher oil prices, they resulted in massive increases in the import bills of the oil importing LDCs. Second, they financed a construction-cum-consumption boom in West Asia, which attracted human and material resources from the rest of the world including the LDCs. This resulted in an inflow of foreign exchange through larger exports and remittances and helped finance a part of the burgeoning oil bills that the oil importers had to meet.

These developments did not pass India by. The initial increase in her oil import bill was followed by an expansion of exports to West Asia as well as by the creation of a migration trail that took Indian masons, carpenters, technicians and professionals to unfamiliar lands. The importance of the former should not be underestimated since India achieved a creditable export volume growth of 7.3 per cent during the seventies (10.2 per cent between 1972-73 and 1976-77), when import volumes in her major markets were expanding at only 4.4-5 per cent per annum.¹ (See Table I). Not surprisingly,

Table I
Average Annual Growth of World Imports
and GDP 1970-80 (Percent)

	Import Volume	Real GDP
Industrial Market Economies	4.4	3.2
Low Income Economies	3.1	4.6
Middle Income Economies	4.2	5.6
Oil importers	3.8	5.6
Oil exporters	8.9	5.5

Indian Export Growth (1970-80) 7.3%

SOURCE: World Bank, South Asia Programs, India Division, *Situation and Prospects of the Indian Economy—A Medium Term Perspective*, Report No. 4962-IN, April 16, 1984.

the direction of India's exports also changed, with the share going to the oil exporters doubling, the shares of the industrial and developing countries remaining constant and the share of the centrally planned economies showing a decline. Looking closer we find that this trend really manifested itself in the period immediately following the first oil shock, with the oil exporters accounting for a much larger share of the increase in India's exports between 1970 and 1975 than of her total in the base year (Table II). As for remittances

Table II
Indian trade in the World Context

	Industrial Countries	Oil Exporters	Developing Countries	(percentages) CPEs	Total
Direction of Indian Exports					
1970	54.9	6.5	19.2	19.4	100
1975	47.9	17.2	17.7	17.2	100
1980	53.1	12.6	21.0	12.7	100
1981	55.6	12.2	19.9	11.8	100
1982	55.0	12.6	21.1	11.3	100
Share of total increment in Indian Export Value					
1970-75	41.8	26.4	16.5	15.2	100
1975-80	61.1	6.4	25.7	6.8	100

SOURCE: Same as Table I

from non-resident Indians, their widely accepted importance in shoring up India's balance of payments bears reiteration. Net current transfers under the invisibles head of the current account (consisting mainly of such remittances) rose from about \$100 million a year during 1970-73 to \$158 million in 1973-74, \$470 million in 1975-76, and \$1,180 million in 1978-79 (Table III).

Table III
Net Invisible Receipts and Net Current Transfers
in the Current Account (US \$ Million)

Year	NIR	NCT	Year	NIR	NCT
1970-71	-169	83	1977-78	1678	1077
1971-72	-159	112	1978-79	1903	1180
1972-73	-131	96	1979-80	3181	1852
1973-74	-40	158	1980-81	4736	2771
1974-75	274	257	1981-82	3578	2318
1975-76	566	470	1982-83	2373	1849
1976-77	895	692	1983-84	1998	1790

NOTE: Converted from rupees using annual average IMF conversion rates

SOURCE: Same as Table I

In the net, in the first phase after the oil price hike of 1973-74, revenues from exports to West Asia and remittances from Indians resident abroad provided the basic wherewithal to meet the threat that burgeoning oil bills posed to India's balance of payments. While other oil importing LDCs went

scrambling to international financial markets to garner the funds needed to finance their current account deficits, India notched up a current account surplus during the years 1975-79

The Second Phase

However, in the immediately following years (1979-81), constituting a second phase in our understanding, matters took a turn for the worse. To start with, the second oil shock sent oil prices skyrocketing, with the increase recorded totalling 150 per cent over two years. Secondly, the global economic recession found Indian exports taking a beating, with the volume of exports falling by 4.5 per cent in 1980-81.² Put together these developments raised India's balance of trade deficit from Rs 1,000 crore in 1977-78 to more than Rs 5,800 crore at the turn of the decade. If this did not result in a major balance of payments crisis, it was because remittances from Indians in petro-dollar rich West Asia, totalling an estimated Rs 2,000 crore a year, helped boost invisible receipts to Rs 4,311 crore in 1980-81. But the neutralising impact of remittances notwithstanding, the current account deficit rose sharply from Rs 234.5 crore in 1979-80 to Rs 1,656.6 crore in 1980-81 and Rs 2,317.3 crore in 1981-82 (Table IV).

Table IV
Current account balance (Rs. crore)

Year	Magnitude
70-71	-331.4
71-72	-401.5
72-73	-251.6
73-74	+1301.4
74-75	-644.4
75-76	294.2
76-77	1525.8
77-78	1734.7
78-79	176.7
79-80	-234.5
80-81	-1656.6
81-82	-2317.3
82-83*	-2756.5
83-84*	-2599.7
84-85*	-3276.1

*World Bank estimates

This worsening of the balance of payments situation called forth two responses on the part of the government of India. To start with, it chose to exploit intensively a major oil find in Bombay High, so as to reduce India's dependence on imported oil. The success of this effort is reflected in the fact that domestic oil production rose from 10.51 million tonnes in 1980-81 to 29 million tonnes in 1984-85, reducing the share of imports in domestic con-

Table V
Trends in India's Foreign Trade

Year	Exports Rs crores	% change over previous year	Imports Rs crores	% change over previous year	Trade Balance
1976-77	5,142	27.2	5,074	-3.6	+68
1978-79	5,726	6.2	6,814	13.1	-1088
1980-81	6,711	4.6	12,549	37.3	-5838
1981-82	7,806	16.3	13,608	8.4	-5802
1982-83	8,908	14.1	14,356	5.6	-5448
1983-84	9,872	10.8	15,763	9.8	-5891
1984-85	11,297	14.4	16,485	4.6	-5188

products (16.1 per cent), and traditional exports like jute manufactures (10 per cent), cotton fabrics (10.6 per cent), leather and leather manufactures (7.7 per cent), tea (15.2 per cent) and readymade garments (14.7 per cent). While POL exports are merely the reflection of the need to swap indigenous crudes for varieties more suited to our refining capacity, jute and tea benefited from favourable conditions in international markets that are unlikely to persist. And cotton fabrics and readymade garments that accounted for 25 per cent of the increment in export earnings benefited from the halting recovery in the West and the high value of the dollar, but are likely to be faced with protectionist restrictions if such growth persists. Thus even the small recovery on the balance of trade is unlikely to prove sustainable, leaving India where it was when the second oil shock first widened her deficit to a potentially explosive degree.

Three factors underlie this failure to restore a semblance of proportion to our balance of trade figures. First, the stagnation in export volumes in the eighties—a trend that appears to have reversed itself over the last two years. Second, bulk imports of foodgrains, edible oils and fertilisers that to differing degrees neutralised a part of the saving in oil imports in each of these years. The ratio of the increase in the value of imports of these three items to the total increase in the value of imports amounted to 52 per cent in 1983-84 and 200 per cent in 1984-85. Finally, the quickening of the pace of import liberalisation seen since 1980 when a Congress government under Indira Gandhi came back to power. The significance of this can be seen from the fact that if we take the break-up of imports under major heads for the periods 1978-79 and 1981-82 (i.e., immediately after the second oil shock), we find that increased outlays on oil account for only 52 per cent of the incremental value of imports between these two years. On the other hand as much as 38 per cent of the increase is accounted for by raw materials and intermediate goods, components and spares, iron and steel, non ferrous metals and complete machinery and equipments.⁷ According to World Bank estimates, while the bulk import items, taken together, showed no growth in volume during 1983-84, total imports are estimated to have grown by 7 per cent, implying a

sumption from 65 to less than 30 per cent. As a result, the annual foreign exchange outflow (after adjusting for exports) on account of petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) fell by about Rs 1,900 crore over the first five years of this decade.³ While this direct defence against the impact of the oil price hike was working itself out, the government also chose to go in for an SDR 5 billion loan from the IMF, of which SDR 3.9 billion were utilised over the period November 1981 to April 1984.

Needless to say, these developments helped moderate what appeared to be an explosive trend in India's balance of payments. In fact, on the surface India appears to have performed well with foreign exchange reserves excluding gold and special drawing rights, rising consistently from its October 1982 low of Rs 3,133 crore to a peak of Rs 7,247 crore on 10 May 1985.⁴ However, a significant part of this increase was accounted for by India's growing indebtedness and by the appreciation of the dollar which raised the rupee value of our reserves. If drawals under the extended financing facility of the IMF are excluded, reserves declined by Rs 982 crore in 1982-83 and Rs 181 crore in 1983-84. And as for the increase in reserves of Rs 1,257 crore during the year ending May 1985, when India did not draw any additional instalments from the IMF, it is to a large extent explained both by the appreciation in the value of the dollar as well as borrowing from other sources. Not surprisingly therefore, reserves have set themselves on a downward trend, touching Rs 6,417 crore on August 9, 1985.⁵

Persistence of the Trade Deficit

However, these high reserve figures still conceal one important fact: that the government's responses to its burgeoning trade deficit have not corrected the structural imbalance that afflicted our balance of trade at the turn of the decade. In fact, one of the principal arguments provided in defence of the decision to resort to the IMF loan was that it would provide India with a three-year respite during which she could carry out the structural adjustments that would boost exports and curtail imports to an extent required to substantially reduce her balance of trade deficit. But today, when repayments on the IMF loan have fallen due, the trade deficit is still at uncomfortably high levels. The Rs 1,900 crore saving in net POL imports notwithstanding, the deficit in 1983-84 was at Rs 5,891 crore, slightly above the 1980-81 value of Rs 5,838 crore (Table V). And though provisional figures suggest that the deficit fell to Rs 5,188 crore in 1984-85, there is little ground for expecting this trend to persist in the coming years. To start with, the decline in the trade gap was not the result of a decline in imports, which in fact registered a 4.6 per cent increase in value. Since simultaneously exports grew by 14.4 per cent in value terms, the deficit narrowed by Rs 760 crores, to the still absolutely high level of Rs 5,188 crore. A close examination of the factors underlying the sharp increase in exports (based on commodity-wise figures available with the CMIE)⁶ suggests that about 75 per cent of the increase in the value of exports was accounted for by crude oil and petroleum

continued substantial volume growth (14.5 per cent) in "other" imports. These "other" imports which include foodgrains are estimated to have grown in volume terms by 17 per cent per annum since 1979-80. Excluding foodgrains the figure works out to 16 per cent.⁴

Thus in what can be seen as a third phase (1981-85) after the oil price hike of 1973-74, the structural crisis in India's balance of payments has taken on a completely different character. No more is it the burgeoning oil import bill that accounts for our gaping balance of trade deficit, but a combination of import liberalisation, inadequate controls on speculation that leads to large scale imports of foodgrains, sugar and edible oils (to an extent far greater than warranted by the supply-demand imbalance) and shortages in areas like fertilisers, resulting partly from inadequate utilisation of domestic capacity due to infrastructural bottlenecks.

Surprisingly, it is precisely in this phase that the government has chosen to follow the policy of liberalising imports with the aim of providing exporters the wherewithal to boost exports to an extent where they can help overcome India's balance of payments problem. While the import policy statement of 1984 placed 94 new items of industrial machinery under the Open General Licence (OGL), this year's liberalisation package has permitted as many as 685 items to be imported without restriction, either through their decanalisation or through their inclusion in the OGL list. The immediate impact of these moves would no doubt be a sharp increase in the volume of imports, as the pent-up demand for imported technology, equipment, intermediates and consumption goods releases itself. Even if this were to result in an increase in the competitiveness of Indian industry and therefore in our exports in the long run, the short run effect could only be a widening of the balance of trade deficit, and a consequent increase in India's indebtedness. In fact, the effects of the new policy are already being felt. During the first three months of this financial year (April-July 1985), while exports increased by 0.4 per cent relative to the corresponding period of the previous year, imports increased by 29 per cent, taking the trade deficit during that period to Rs. 3,079.08 crores as compared with Rs. 1,704.55 crores last year. This suggests that the trade deficit this year is likely to be well above the record levels reached during the early 1980s. This is not surprising since the available evidence suggests that, even assuming extremely favourable conditions with regard to imports, foreign aid and remittances, India could be faced with a veritable crisis on her external front in the medium term. This becomes clear from the estimates provided below of the pace at which exports would have to grow if the strain on our balance of payments is to be overcome by the end of the Seventh Plan, and the extent of indebtedness that would have to be sustained even if we manage to recover the satisfactory pace of expansion in exports witnessed in the 1970s.

The Estimates

If we look at trends in imports in the 1970s we find that between 1970-71

and 1981-82 the quantum index of imports increased at a trend rate of 6.57 per cent annum. We assume that this is the rate at which the volume of imports would increase over the Seventh Plan. The World Bank in its balance of payments projections has provided for an import volume growth of 6.4 per cent over the Seventh Plan period, a figure not far short of that assumed by us. And the Planning Commission in its Draft Plan has, without providing any convincing reasons, assumed a rate of growth in import volume of 5.8 per cent. Hence our assumption by no means exaggerates the possible increase in imports during 1985-90. On the contrary, it is in all probability an extremely conservative one, given the massive liberalisation in import policy seen in recent times.

Since the value of imports in financial year 1984-85 stood at Rs. 16,485 crore, increases in the volume of imports at the rate of 6.57 per cent annum would alone take the value of imports to Rs. 22,692 crore in 1989-90. Taking into account an assumed 7 per cent increase in international prices, the figure for that year would stand at Rs. 31,827 crore.

In the past an increase in imports was partly met through an increase in net receipts from invisibles, which rose sharply from \$ 274 million in 1974-75 to \$ 4,736 million in 1980-81. However, such receipts have tended to decline since then, with their value totalling \$ 3,578 million in 1983-84. Even the Sixth Plan document expected "net receipts from invisibles" to remain more or less at the estimated level of the base year." Despite this we assume that net invisible receipts (excluding net payments of interest and investment income included elsewhere) would grow at an annual compound rate of 5 per cent starting with its 1982-83 value of Rs. 3,957 crore. Hence in financial year 1989-90, such receipts would stand at Rs. 5,568 crore.

In addition to this, part of the burden of financing the current account gap is borne by increasing aid flows. With the advent of the Reagan administration, such flows have tended to be restricted, so that gross disbursements stagnated at around Rs. 2,000-2,200 crores during 1981-84 and then rose to Rs. 2,707 crore in 1984-85. With the likely curtailment of World Bank aid, unless its capital base is enhanced, and the uncertainty surrounding bilateral aid, expectations are that aid flows would tend to stagnate during the Seventh Plan. However, we assume here that gross disbursements would increase at the compound rate of 5 per cent annum over the five year period 1985-90. Hence in 1989-90, inflows on this account would amount to Rs. 3,455 crore.

Finally, while deposits in non-resident rupee and foreign currency accounts have tended to taper off in recent times and are likely to decline in the wake of recent reductions in the higher differential rate of 10.5 per cent provided to them, we assume that the annual inflow on this account would remain at the average levels they reached during the years 1983-85. This would place the inflow under this head in 1989-90 at Rs. 893 crore.

Now, if the balance of payments problem is to be overcome by the end of the Seventh Plan, the value of exports has to be at a level that permits it to

Table VI

Rate of growth of quantum index of imports 1970-71—1981-82= 6.57 per cent per annum
 Rate of growth of quantum index of exports 1970-71—1981-82= 7.86 per cent per annum

Projection assuming similar rates of growth in imports over 1985-86—1989-90 with a 7% increase in import and export prices										
Year	Imports	Exports	Trade Balance	Net Invisible Receipts (excluding net payments of interest & other investment income)	Current a/c balance (excluding payments net of interest & other investment income)	Foreign Aid (Gross disbursement)	NRI Deposits	Debt servicing of existing debts	Pvt Investment & Commercial Borrowing	Addl debt servicing
1	2	3	4=3-1	5	6	7	8°	9°°	10	11
(Actuals) 1-1										
1984-85	16,485	11,297	(-)5188	4,363*		2707				
1985-86	18,803	12,982	(-)5821	4,581*	(-)1240	2842**	893	2,843	348	
1986-87	21,447	14,919	(-)6528	4,810*	(-)1718	2985**	893	3,456	1296	80
1987-88	24,463	17,145	(-)7318	5,050*	(-)2268	3134**	893	3,838	2079	374
1988-89	27,903	19,702	(-)8201	5,303*	(-)2898	3290**	893	4,045	2760	830
1989-90	31,827	22,641	(-)9186	5,568*	(-)3618	3455**	893	3,791	3061	1417
VII Plan					11742				12,245	

* Assuming a 5% annual compound growth rate starting with its 1982-83 value of Rs 3,957 crores ** Assuming a 5% annual compound growth rate starting with its 1984-85 value ° Assuming inflow remains constant at the average of levels attained in 1983-84 & 1984-85 °° CMIE estimates
 Exports needed in 1989-90 to meet imports-net invisible-FA-NRI deposits+debt repayments=Rs 25,702 crore at current prices or Rs 18,325 crore at 1984-85 prices

Export growth needed to balance payments Value 17.87 per cent
 Volume 10.16 per cent
 Debt service ratio taking two rounds of borrowing = 20.9%

meet the import bill, after deducting net invisible receipts, aid inflows and non-resident deposits as well as clear the debt service payments on existing debt due that year (Rs 3,791 crore).⁹ This makes the value of exports to be attained in 1989-90 equal to Rs 25,702 crore at current prices. Assuming that the terms of trade facing India would remain unchanged (again a conservative assumption), this implies that the value of exports at 1984-84 prices would amount to Rs 18,325 crore in 1989-90, since international prices are assumed to increase at an annual rate of 7 per cent. Thus, since exports in 1984-85 stood at Rs 11,297 crore, even the most optimistic projection would require exports to increase at the compound annual rate of 10.2 per cent in volume terms or 17.87 per cent in value terms in order that India may overcome her balance of payments problem by 1989-90. Since even in the seventies, when India's export growth rate was creditable, the rate of increase in export volume was only 7.36 per cent, the near impossibility of attaining an above 10 per cent rate of increase in export volume should be obvious.

Let us therefore assume that, just as imports are expected to increase at the rate they did in the seventies, export volume growth is also restored from the stagnant trend of the early eighties to the creditable levels of the seventies. This would require India to resort to commercial borrowing of different magnitudes to finance her current account deficits over the five year 1985-90 (see Table VI). Assuming that these loans are repayable over a ten year period and are provided at an interest rate of 13 per cent, with both interest and amortisation instalments falling due the year after the loan is taken, resorting to commercial borrowing would necessitate additional doses of borrowing, which again would have to be serviced. Stopping this process at the end of the second round of borrowing, we calculate the level the debt service ratio would reach in 1989-90. This amounts to 21 per cent—a level above the ceiling of 20 per cent that both the Bank and the Indian government has set for that ratio. Thus even if the government's export thrust permits a return to the export growth rates of the seventies, the financing of imports growing at the rates they touched in the seventies would itself take the debt service ratio to unacceptable levels, even if all other factors prove most favourable to India.

Needless to say, with the process of import liberalisation having proceeded apace, import volumes are likely to grow at rates much higher than they did in the seventies. This can have disastrous consequences for the balance of payments (Table VII). According to our estimates, even assuming a favourable international environment and a rate of growth in export volumes equal to that attained in the seventies, if imports grow at an annual compound rate even one per cent higher than they did in the sixties, the debt service ratio in 1989-90 would touch 23.2 per cent—a level that indicates India's inevitable descent into the club of debt-burdened LDCs who have to accept stringent austerity programmes under the auspices of the Bank and the IMF. On the other hand, if this higher rate of growth of imports has to be financed only with larger exports, India's export volume would have to grow at the compound rate of 11.4 per cent per annum and export values at 19.2

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Table VII
Projection assuming no change in the rate of growth of exports volume and 1% higher rate of growth (7.5%) of import volume with everything else remaining the same

Year	Imports	Exports	Trade Balance	Net Invisible Receipts (excluding net payment of interest & other investment income)	Current a/c balance (excluding net payment of interest & other investment income)	Foreign aid (gross disbursement)	NRI deposits	Debits servicing of existing debts	Pvt Investment & Commercial Borrowing	Addl debt servicing (Repayment over 10 years starting immediately succeeding year and a 13% interest rate)
1984-85	16,485	11,297	(-5188)	4363		2707				
1985-86	18,980	12,982	(-5998)	4581	(-1417)	2842	893	2,843	525	
1986-87	21,852	14,919	(-6933)	4810	(-2123)	2985	893	3,456	1701	120.8
1987-88	25,158	17,145	(-8013)	5050	(-2963)	3134	893	3,838	2774	505.2
1988-89	28,965	19,702	(-9263)	5303	(-3960)	3290	893	4,045	3822	1114.2
1989-90	33,348	22,641	(-10707)	5568	(-5139)	3455	893	3,791	4582	1982.3
VII Plan					(-15,602)					17,127

Exports needed in 1989-90 to meet M-NI-FA-NRID+existing debt servicing 27223 cr in current prices or 19410 crore in 1984-85 prices

Export growth Volume terms 11.43 per cent

Value terms 19.23 per cent

Debt service ratio after two rounds of borrowing=23.2%

Table VIII
Projection assuming no change in the rate of growth of exports and a 1% lower rate of growth (5.57%) of import volume with everything else remaining the same

Year	Imports	Exports	Trade Balance	Net Invisible Receipts (excluding net payment of interest & other investment income)	Current a/c balance (excluding net payments of interest & other investment income)	Foreign aid gross disbursement)	NRI deposits	Debt servicing existing debts	Pvt Invest - Commercial Borrowing	Addl debt servicing (Repayment over 10 yrs starting immediately succeeding year and a 13% interest rate)
1984-85	16,485	11,297	(-)5188	4363		2707				
1985-86	18,627	12,982	(-)5645	4581	(-)1064	2842	893	2,843	172	
1986-87	21,047	14,919	(-)6128	4810	(-)1318	2985	893	3,456	896	39.56
1987-88	23,781	17,145	(-)6636	5050	(-)1586	3134	893	3,838	1397	243.4
1988-89	26,871	19,702	(-)7169	5303	(-)1866	3290	893	4,045	1728	550.8
1989-90	30,362	22,641	(-)7721	5568	(-)2153	3455	893	3,791	1596	916.2
VII Plan					(-)7987					7539

Exports needed in 1989-90 to meet M-NI-FA-NRID+existing debt servicing=

24287 cr in current prices or 17281 cr in 1984-85 prices

Export growth Volume terms 8.87 per cent

Value terms 16.49 per cent

Debt service ratio in 1989-90 after two rounds of borrowing 18.9%

per cent per annum. Neither of these is likely, given past experience and protectionist trends in the international economy

As opposed to these scenarios, the one which does offer hope of rescuing India's balance of payments from a possible crisis, is that which argues for a policy of greater import controls combined with selective promotion of exports (Table VII). If this could take export growth rates to the levels they attained in the seventies, but reduce the rate of growth of import volume by one per cent to 5.57 per cent per annum, then the debt service ratio after two rounds of borrowing can be restricted to 18.9 per cent—a level below the ceiling specified by the Bank and the government. Put briefly, our conservative projections of trends in India's balance of payments not only establish the near-impossibility of dealing with the structural imbalance in our balance of trade through an open-door policy aimed at boosting exports, but also argue for a regime of greater import controls, if the balance of payments crisis is to be kept at bay. Seen in this light, the government's liberalisation drive and its refusal to assess the full implication of recent trends in our balance of payments, presages a process of cumulative indebtedness that could threaten India's already weakened national sovereignty.

1 See World Bank, *Situation and Prospects of the Indian Economy—A Medium Term Perspective, Volume III*, Report No. 4962-IN, South Asia Programs, India Division, April 16, 1984, pp. 55-6.

2 *Ibid*, Table 3, 5, p. 58.

3 Net imports of crude oil and petroleum products stood at Rs. 5258 crore in 1980-81 and Rs. 3,318 crore in 1984-85. See Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy, Economic Intelligence Service, *Basic Statistics relating to the Indian Economy, Vol. II*, Bombay August 1984, Table 20, 8, 1, and *Economic Outlook*, Bombay, June 1985, Table 2, 6, p. 18.

4 *Ibid*, p. 20.

5 Figure obtained from a reply to a question in Parliament by Minister of State Janardhan Poojary.

6 *Economic Outlook*, June 1985, Table 2, 5, p. 17.

7 See Statement No. 2 in Government of India, Ministry of Commerce *Import and Export Policy for April 1985 to March 1988*, full text of the Official Press Note issued on 12 April 1985, reprinted by Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy, Bombay, April 1985.

8 World Bank, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

9 While this figure (obtained from CMIE, *Economic Outlook*, Table 3.6, p. 24) includes net interest payments on debt it excludes net investment income on other forms of investment—an outflow that is not included anywhere in our calculations (since they are not available separately), introducing a bias favourable to India in our estimates.

SHAIKH MUHAMMAD RASHID *

Land Reforms in Pakistan

NO THINKING man today anywhere on this globe will dispute the fact that of all reforms, the one relating to agrarian structure is the most difficult to introduce and is even more difficult to enforce. While the control of the capitalists is confined to the economy in the cities, the feudal lords hold sway in both economic field and political arena in the country side. The land generates not only unearned income for them but is a source of their political strength as well. They make and unmake the governments. While in the industries or commercial enterprises the trade unions of workers can compel the industrialists/capitalists to concede their demands through collective bargaining or strikes, the scattered unorganized tenants, field workers and artisans, unaware of their rights, are, like serfs, the obedient subjects of the landlords. The feudal lords are virtually rulers in their respective estates. It is a historical truth that, inspite of being a very small minority, the feudal community ruled in different parts of the universe for centuries. Pakistan was achieved by sacrifices of the broad masses of the Muslims of India, but since its inception the apparently insignificant minority of the feudal lords continues to be the masters of the destiny of the whole people, either in the elected governments or as allies of the JUNTA. They wormed their way even into Pakistan People's Party, which stood for socialist transformation of the society. They have been dominating in the party and its government throughout. On 5 July 1977, when Martial law was imposed, 14 out of 22 federal ministers, three out of four chief ministers of the provinces belonged to the feudal community while three out of four governors were ex-rulers of states. Obviously feudalism has deep roots with wide-spread tentacles. Unless, therefore, there is a bloody revolution, any in-roads into the feudal forts prove ephemeral; the vested interests entrenched in them succeed in upsetting the well-meaning plans of unwary reformers. The reactionary impact of the almost primeval forces which dying feudal landlordism generates, with its co-partners amongst the industrial tycoons and accomplices amongst the front line bureaucracy, can be felt in all its fierceness by those engaged in the task of implementing Land Reforms. The terrific, deep-rooted resistance met in the way of Land Reforms is matched only by the very basic benefits in more than one dimension which follow from a proper implementation.

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unlike most other reforms whose advantages remain confined to the particular fields in which they are carried out

Is it any wonder then that the late Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto attended to Land Reforms before taking up the reforms in other areas? It was realized that the masses of Pakistan, like most other countries of Asia still live in rural areas and make a living out of land. The produce generated from land is also the largest single item of the Gross National Product and its contribution alone to National Income is still more than 50 per cent. The rural population accounts for over 70 per cent of the total. On the other hand, the bulk of the rural population consists of the landless and small holders. They lack the very basic resource i.e., land with which to work. The few who cultivate lands of others are constantly haunted by the fear of being thrown out. This insecurity is the worst enemy of production. In such circumstances, land reforms are an imperative for the development of human resources in rural areas, so that production is maximized, intensity of agriculture is enhanced and employment is generated.

Against this background, the people's Government within three months of taking over power moved in with *Revolutionary Land Reforms*. For the first time in the history of Pakistan effective changes in agrarian structure were made by law. Land, the precious resource concentrated in a few hands, was acquired by law from those who could not even use all of it. Land was then redistributed to the landless peasantry.

Similarly the tiller for the first time had been provided security of tenure. The peasant could now put his body and soul into his work without fear of whimsical ejection.

The essence of the Land Reforms was that they slashed down in one stroke the ceiling of an individual holding from 500 acres irrigated or 1000 acres unirrigated (36,000 Produce Index Units) fixed by the so-called reforms of the Ayub Regime, to 150 acres irrigated or 300 acres unirrigated (12,000 PIUs) by enforcement of Land Reforms Regulation No. 115 of 1972. This ceiling was further reduced to 100 acres of irrigated or 200 acres of unirrigated land (8,000 produce index units) by another Act of 1977. Still further reduction of ceiling was to be effected during that tenure of the government. The lavish concessions permitted by Ayub Khan's Martial Law Regulation (repealed by the People's Government), to the landed aristocracy allowing retention of additional 150 acres of orchards, gifts of land upto 18,000 PIUs to heirs, and transfer of land upto 6,000 PIUs to family dependents, which in most cases inflated individual holdings upto 80,000 PIUs had been scrapped.

For the first time, notice of land acquired by bureaucracy was taken and all government servants who acquired land from 1959 upto 2 years of ceasing to be in service, had been required to surrender land in excess of 100 acres.

Shukarqahs and *Wagfs* exempted by the repealed Regulation had been placed within the pale of Reforms. Stud Farms distributed by way of pat-

ronage by the previous Governments had also been resumed

The lands under the new law had been taken over *without compensation*. It has been truly said by some discerning observers that Ayub Khan's reforms in many cases proved to be a device to buy surplus areas of the landed gentry on terms none too unfavourable

Even more important, all the resumed land was being transferred to the tillers of the soil, *free of cost*, with full ownership rights without any encumbrance or liability

The Government was aware that before the advent of the Reforms, land owners were feverishly transferring land on an extensive scale and in a manner which would defeat the land reforms. To counteract these nefarious deals, the *bonafides* of all transactions, which took place after the 1st of March 1967, with the exception of transfers made in favour of heirs, were made subject to scrutiny under the law. This exemption was flouted by the unscrupulous landlords. Antedate entries could be conveniently made in the revenue record in collusion with the local revenue officers, especially of the transfers made by way of gifts, where deeds of transfer did not require compulsory registration. Such manipulations were done on a massive scale. Even oral gift is permissible under the law. In fact it was a serious flaw, inherent in the law itself, which gave latitude to the land lords to escape from the operation of land reforms. This also provided a handle to the land reforms tribunals in the provinces, mostly coming from the upper classes, the protagonists of status quo, to approve the transactions without even probing into their factual existence. Federal inspection teams were appointed by the Federal Land Commission, hereafter referred to as F L C. On their reports *suo moto* revisional proceedings were initiated by the F L C, against 3,263 land lords and cases of 2,712 were decided. The area wrongly retained by the big land lords, waderas of Sind, Sardars of Baluchistan, chiefs of laghari, mazaris, tawanais, qureshis etc, from the Punjab and Khawans of N W F P, through concealment, collusion, forgeries etc, and resumed in decided cases by F L C upto 30th April 1977, amounted to 5,67,835 acres (Out of this more than five lakh acres were resumed by the chairman alone while the rest was taken over by six members collectively). It may be noted that these cases were verified as correct by the provincial land reforms tribunals. The toiling masses fully understand that the usurpers of their rights are none other than the elders of their own nationalities, who, even after expropriating the fruits of their labour for centuries, are not prepared even today to countenance any diminution of expropriation. All the same they profess to be champions of their rights. Is it not the case that with the intention of perpetuating their strangle hold, they want to avert class struggle as a result of the unity of the working classes of different regions of Pakistan, which may put an end to the external as well as internal exploitation?

It was due to lack of interest and underhand dealings that the network of land reforms hierarchy in all the four provinces of Pakistan could resume only 11,56,362 acres of land under Land Reforms Regulation 1972, while, as stated above, a single tribunal of F.L.C., on the scrutiny of the cases decided

by the provincial tribunals, was able to discover area equal to half of this figure. In pat feeder canal area as also in the former states of N W F P the role of the Provincial Government of Baluchistan and N W F P. was to deprive the rightful tillers of the soil and favour the sardars and ex-rulers respectively. Here, too, the F L C interfered, in exercise of its *suo moto* power, to safeguard legitimate interests of the oppressed toiling masses for whose emancipation the land reforms were introduced. This is briefly dealt with in their proper places below. In fact the provincial governments, for the reasons given below, were purposely trying to defeat the land reforms. It is with the efforts of the federal government that the reforms were made tangible. The aggregate of distributable area was brought upto 33,40,321 acres, out of this 14,77,573 acres were distributed to 1,37,005 tenants. In addition about fifty thousand families were permanently settled in the former states of Dir, Swat and Chitral.

Ejectment of Tenants

The most distinguished feature of the Land Reforms was that they had given the tenants dignity and security. The new law forbid the ejectment of tenants except for specified grounds, namely, if the tenant defaulted in rent payment, or made the land unfit for cultivation.

Further, the procedure for ejectment had been so framed as to safeguard the interests of tenants to the maximum and also to eliminate vexatious delays. Under a directive of the Federal Government, the following provisions had been specially incorporated in the procedure for ejectment:

- i) A suit for ejectment shall be decided by the trial court in 60 days
- ii) Appeal against the order of the trial court shall be filed within 15 days
- iii) If a case is not decided by the trial court within 60 days, it should automatically go to the Superior Court which should then act as original court and decide within 30 days
- iv) The record of the case should be forwarded by the trial court to the Superior Court with an explanation by the lower court as to why the case could not be disposed of within the stipulated period. If this explanation is not found satisfactory, the lower court should be censured
- v) Permission to file a revision will be available *to the tenants only* and not the landlords
- vi) In the case of a tenant ejected illegally, the tenancy shall be restored within 30 days of the order passed by the court, if no appeal is filed and, in case of appeal, within 30 days of the order of the appellate court.

In the new landlord-tenant relationship under the 1972 Land Reforms, the burden of taxation was placed entirely on the landlords. As from Kharif 1972—

- (a) Land revenue and other taxes, cesses, surcharges and levies on land shall be payable by the owner,
- (b) the liability for payment of water-rate and providing seed shall be

that of the owner (or other person in possession thereof, other than the tenants)

(c) the cost of fertilizers and pesticides required for the land comprised in a tenancy shall be shared equally between the owner and the tenant, and

(d) no owner or person in possession of any land shall levy any cess on, or take any free labour from, any tenant

For the first time, the tenant was given the first right of pre-emption in respect of the land comprised in his tenancy. For the enforcement of this right, it had been provided in the Land Reforms Regulation that all such suits shall be exclusively entertained, heard and decided by *Revenue Courts instead of Civil Courts*. The Court of original jurisdiction shall be that of Collector.

In the division of produce, the Reforms lay down that the tenant shall not be required to pay a penny more than the provincial tenancy laws provide, but if he holds land on more favourable terms, he shall continue to do so notwithstanding what the tenancy laws stipulate.

The Land Reforms had generated a substantial demand for credit. Therefore, simultaneously with the Land Reforms, the People's Government had taken measures in the field of agricultural credit to assure greater facilities to small farmers. Towards this end, the "Loans for Agricultural Purposes Act 1973" was passed by the Federal Government under which small owners were issued a "Pass-Book" which contained details of land held by the farmers, its value in produce index units and encumbrance if any.

The Pass Book was deemed to be a title deed by Banks for giving loans which were granted forthwith and spot investigation was normally waived. The cash loan was credited in one lumpsum to the Savings Account opened by the loanee, or where in kind, by placing a supply order with a firm of the loanee's choice. Recovery of loans was made in easy instalments. On payment of loan in full, the Branch Manager recorded redemption in the Pass Book and the Revenue Officer was informed for similar action. It had been ensured that 70 per cent of the loan would be advanced to small owners of less than subsistence holdings.

Small farmers had, from as far back as 1937, repeatedly represented against the land revenue they were required to pay. Official committees even up-held the justification for the representations, but rejected them for administrative reasons. There was a vague proposal in 1969 to abolish land revenue on holdings up to five acres but this was never pursued. The People's Government exempted owners of upto 12 acres of irrigated and 25 acres of non-irrigated land from payment of land revenue, local rate, development cesses and all other cesses from Rabi 1975-76. Subsequently when the land revenue system was to be replaced by an agricultural income tax, holdings of 25 acres of irrigated and 50 acres of unirrigated land were to be exempted from the payment of income tax. This was not only an exemption from the tax burden, but also made the peasants free from the traditional vicious clutches of revenue collectors and litigation.

For the settlement of the long outstanding problem of the area of pat feeder canal Kachhi and Sibi districts of Baluchistan The Land Reforms (Baluchistan Pat Feeder Canal) Regulation 1972 (MLR 117) was promulgated by the Peoples' Government. Some indication of the extent of these reforms may be had from the fact that 5,36,831 acres of land were declared state land and were being distributed to cultivating tenants at the rate of 16 acres to single and 32 acres to joint tenants, when Martial Law was imposed. In the first instance the sardars and big landlords manoeuvred to grab the entire land by securing *benami* allotments in the names of fictitious tenants. The chairman F L C, after an on-the-spot inquiry, cancelled the bogus allotments and directed fresh allotments to be made to genuine tenants. Saradri system in Baluchistan was abolished and exaction of *shashuk* and *khums* was made unlawful.

On the 18th of December 1976, the People's Government took a bold step about the distribution of state land among landless tenants and poor peasants owning less than subsistence holdings. A National Charter for the peasants was issued, whereby, in addition to conferring proprietary rights of the land on the occupancy tenants and grantees of state land, it was declared that all culturable state land including Katcha Lands of Sind would be distributed with full ownership rights among peasants who either own no land or own less than subsistence holdings, and in no case would state land be auctioned or given on lease in large tracts. According to an estimate 50,23,165 acres of land were then readily available for the purpose in addition to Katcha lands of Sind. Here also the provincial governments, whose duty it was to distribute the same, dillydallied for ulterior reasons. The big land lords were required to give up possession of large tracts of state and Katcha Land illegally occupied by them.

Co-operative farms are by nature specific socialist agricultural enterprises, which develop and are improved on the basis of pooling of the means of production and other resources. Pakistan is a land of small holders. According to the *Land Reforms in West Pakistan* published in 1960, in West Pakistan (now Pakistan) there were 32,66,137 (about 33 lacs) owners of less than 5 acres (about 2 hectares) holdings. According to the Agriculture Census Report 1960, the owners of less than 25 acres (about 12 hectares) holdings constitute 92 per cent of the farming community. Since then there have been further subdivisions by way of inheritance and transfers. The land reforms introduced in 1964 and 1972 have brought about still further fragmentation. It is relevant to point out that an economic holding is fixed at 64 acres in Sind province and 50 acres in other provinces. This is the minimum unit where mechanised farming is considered economical. The number of such farmers with economic holdings, or above, is hardly two per cent only. There are so many other disadvantages of individual holdings of small pieces of land which have been illustrated in the co-operative farming scheme framed by the People's Government designed to knit the small holdings into large farms. Cooperative farming is the decisive answer to the objection of the big land-lords that fragmentation of land will lead to a decrease in production.

As laid down in the scheme, co-operative farming societies will be independent, democratic institutions free from any interference by the government

In Pakistan we have the twin menace of water-logging and salinity which is affecting some of our best lands at the rate of about one lac acres every year. The People's Government realized that various measures for accelerated supply of improved inputs will fail to achieve their objectives unless simultaneously the menace of water-logging and salinity was controlled effectively. Out of this realization was born the ambitious plan prepared for the eradication of this danger, spreading over 21 years at a cost of Rs. 30,650 million. The work of reclaiming affected lands was yielding satisfactory results.

The story of land reforms in Pakistan will remain incomplete without mention of what has been achieved in the areas of former states of Dir, Swat and Chitral. A commission known as the Land Disputes Enquiry Commission had been set up by the Provincial Government of N W F P to enquire into the agrarian problems in these areas, especially disputes between i) tenants and ex-rulers of the former states of their heirs, ii) the small owners ousted by force by the ex-rulers or their heirs, iii) landlords and tenants.

A large number of tenants were settled with ownership rights, on the lands withdrawn from the ex-ruler, princes and big landlords. The recommendations of the commission and the decisions of the Provincial Government taken thereon were mostly in favour of ex-rulers. The F L C, in exercise of its *suo moto* power interfered to rectify the wrongs done to the rightful claimants. Approximately two lac acres of land, held by the cultivators of Dir had been withdrawn from the ex-ruler princes and other big land lords and full ownership right given to occupant tillers of the soil. About thirty thousand families of small owners ousted mercilessly by the ex-rulers of Swat in their hey-day, were rehabilitated on their holdings. In Chitral also a large number of tenants were settled with ownership rights, on the lands withdrawn from the ex-ruler and the princes. The land being unsurveyed the ex-ruler of Swat managed to retain much more land than his entitlement under the Land Reforms Act. The F L C sent survey teams, who, inspite of extreme cold weather, did carry out survey and measurement of the mountainous region, earmarked the land according to his entitlement and withdrew the surplus which was distributed among the deserving tenants. This uphill task was also accomplished by the federal government although it was the duty of the provincial government to supervise the implementation.

The work of the land reforms was being carried out with full speed when by a *coup d'etat* democratic popular government headed by Z.A. Bhutto was overthrown.

The Land Reforms are designed to break up concentration of landed wealth, narrow down inequalities of opportunities and at the same time encourage more intensive land use. Production is bound to increase as the

new landowners eagerly cultivate the land given to them. The Land Reform has also far-reaching socio-political benefits that have already made themselves felt in the agrarian community of our country. In Pakistan, land is a symbol of prestige. Conferment of proprietary rights has given the tenants a sense of dignity they had never known before in the history of the sub-continent. A whole new generation of satisfied and hard working farmers was coming into being. Even those tenants who could not become owners have a feeling of liberation due to the security of tenure, which makes them virtual owners of the areas in their tenancies. Observers of the rural scene know that they also now emulate the example of their more fortunate brethren who became owners under the reforms. For the first time, the fruit of political economic and social emancipation was **their** to taste. Consequently there developed greater political class consciousness than ever before. The Land Reforms were thus bringing about the emergence of a new Pakistan, and the dawn of a new era free from the feudal exploitation was being ushered in, when the imposition of Martial Law interrupted this process.

Implementation of Land Reforms

The way Land Reforms were introduced and the efforts made to get them through show the genuine concern of the People's Government for breaking large estates and freeing the rural productive forces from the yoke of the primitive cruel system of feudal exploitation. But the most unfortunate aspect of the problem is that the reforms were not implemented on the ground in right earnest. As such their full benefits could not reach the tillers of the soil. Had it been enforced zealously there would have been a strong upsurge among the masses of the rural population to deal a final blow to feudalism. The reason is obvious. The Provincial Governments, who were exclusively responsible for their implementation on the ground had been dominated by the feudal lords. The Chief Ministers and Governors had been either big landlords or Nawabs throughout the tenure of the People's Government. Quite a few ministers and legislators were found acting in gross violation of the Land Reforms Act. Their surplus land, concealed in various ways, was taken over by F L C, in exercise of *suo moto* powers, but they never surrendered the same. The contravention of the Land Reforms Regulation entails severe punishment including rigorous imprisonment up to seven years and forfeiture of the entire immovable property of the offender. The implementation was, therefore, not difficult if there was a will to do so. But as described above, those at the helm of affairs were themselves offenders, how could, then, other offenders be taken to task? Furthermore the Courts of Pakistan, which were vested with the powers of extra-ordinary writ jurisdiction to interfere with the decisions of the Land Reforms tribunals, were mostly the creation of the feudal and capitalist society. Naturally they were biased against the radical measures designed to upset the status quo. They were so liberal in the exercise of their discretionary jurisdiction in favour of the landlords that, for example, a division bench of a High Court by a single judgement accepted nineteen writ petitions and set aside the orders of the

chairman and members of F L C , without going into the merits of the cases, on law or facts, on the minor ground of a technical objection as to the constitution of the tribunal of F L C , namely, that the chairman and members of F L C were competent to dispose of the cases in a joint session and not sitting singly The Supreme Court of Pakistan legalised the imposition of Martial Law and the overthrow of the popularly elected democratic progressive government headed by Z.A Bhutto by pressing into service the 'doctrine of necessity' But this 'cardinal' principle did not come into play while demolishing the whole edifice of the land reforms designed to free the oppressed masses of the country side, from the yoke of feudal exploitation The reason for invoking the so called 'doctrine of necessity' in the former case and not in the latter is obvious, i e , the preservation of the *status quo* In fact for the smooth and speedy implementation of land reforms and other socialistic reforms it was essential to take away the writ jurisdiction of the High Courts in the matter of economic reforms, by getting an amendment to the constitution Such an amendment would have been widely appreciated by the broad masses of Pakistan Other parties could not afford to incur the displeasure of the working people by opposing it either

The Chief Martial law administrator has not only stopped further enforcement and implementation but is reversing the process of land reforms This self styled "mufti" of Pakistan has given a *fatwa* that taking over of individual property is against the injunction of Islam Although his "Islam" has been rejected by the people of Pakistan in the recent referendum, the blessings of his American masters and the support of the arch reactionary *Jamiat Islami* are sufficient for him to continue his anti-people dictates However he does use the threat of the implementation of land reforms as a lever to straighten the land lords, if, on some occasions, under the compulsion of circumstances, they take the side of the people

This is not a new lesson History is replete with such instances After getting rid of Martial law, the workers and the peasants will have to organise themselves under a democratic rule for a political struggle It is only the force of organised working people that will compel the middle classes and other anti-imperialists patriots to be on their side, to strike hard, under the leadership of a revolutionary party, to eradicate the twin curse of feudal and capitalist exploitation

ARUN PROKAS CHATTERJEE*

China's Economy An Aspect

IN CHAPTER I of the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin referred to the relation between the ruin of the small producers and the development of capitalism. He said, quoting from *Das Capital*, that "the expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital the labourers, their means of subsistence and material for labour, it also created the home market."

But the contradiction is here that unless the attachment of the peasantry to the land is broken, the development of capitalism which is a progressive step in the progress of society compared with the stage of feudalism is not possible. In the preface to the Second Edition of the work, Lenin further said that the basis of the final transition from *otrabotki* (share-cropping system) to capitalism is the free development of small peasant farming.

It appears that China, being faced with the problem of industrialization, has been groping for a system since the 1950s which will liberate the peasant masses from servitude to land and take them onwards on the path of modernization and industrialization. Obviously, in a socialist regime, the elemental law of capitalism could not be allowed to operate leading to ruination of small peasants and thus to creation of not only a home market for the indigenous industry but also setting free for industrial capital the labourers, their means of subsistence and material for labour. Lenin himself said that "infinitely diverse combinations are possible of elements of this or that type of capitalist evolution and only hopeless pedants could set about solving the peculiar and complex problem arising merely by quoting this or that opinion of Marx about a different historical epoch."

China learnt from her own experience that the establishment of large communes and placing farm land and other means of production under public ownership did not solve the problem of modernization. According to their statistics, production dropped drastically as a result due to communization of agriculture.

One of the reasons was the decline in the enthusiasm of the peasants. In an article on "China's countryside under reforms", Mr. Du Runsheng, Director of the Rural Policies Research Centre under the Secretariat of the

Communist Party Central Committee, said that, though the gains from the advanced cooperatives on the Soviet model, in which all farm land and other major means of production came under public ownership, could not be ignored, yet, on an overall appraisal, it would be "hard to say that the people's commune campaign from 1958-59 was a success" One reason he cites was that too much concentration of labour force, egalitarianism and pooling of vast areas of land under uniform management stifled the peasants' enthusiasm The situation was aggravated by the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 During that revolution, commune members' private plots, family side lines and free markets were cut off as "capitalist tails" According to Mr Du, Agriculture met a dead end due to these factors

It appears that after the Cultural Revolution and after the destruction of what the Chinese call "the counter-revolutionary Jiang Qing clique", the Chinese leaders began to think about the means to develop and modernize Chinese agriculture In 1978, the Chinese Communist Party convened the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee and mapped out a new road of development of Chinese agriculture The outline of the programme as mapped out through numerous documents issued by the Communist Party is in the words of Mr Du, as follows

"(1) To map out a socialist road suited to Chinese society and search for an economic pattern, which helps fully develop the productive forces and is acceptable to the local people

(2) To encourage mutual aid between the city and country-side for joint development Industrial development should consider what agriculture needs and what the peasants can afford Industry should serve agriculture Township industries should also be properly developed to absorb surplus labour and narrow the undue gap between the city and the countryside

(3) To secure a well-rounded development of the rural economy The development of the rural economy should be co-ordinated with the development of society Some areas and some people should be allowed to get rich first while other places and other people should be given help to prosper together The countryside should develop not only agriculture but industry, trade and other undertakings to a degree At the same time, education, health services and scientific undertakings should be developed

(4) To co-ordinate the development of production with the protection of the ecological environment so that agricultural resources could be used rationally to avoid exhausting them "

The main emphasis was on the development of commodity production It is well-known that the development of commodity production begins the development of capitalism. But the Chinese social scientists refused to concede that the development of commodity production is only a concomitant of capitalist development. According to them, commodity production can

serve either capitalism or socialism. Commodity production can, according to them, stimulate and enliven the existing productive forces, provide all the products needed by China's huge population and thus enrich and consolidate the material basis of the socialist system.

I may once again hark back to the preface that Lenin himself wrote in July 1907 to the Second Edition of his *Development of Capitalism in Russia*. He said that a genuine capitalist revolution requires smashing the feudalist features of agricultural economy. Of course, there is another way in which feudalism might be replaced by capitalism. That is through "the internal metamorphosis of feudalist landlord economy." But there "the entire agrarian system for long retains feudalist features." On the other hand, where the landlord economy is destroyed by revolution, "the basis of the final transition to capitalism is the free development of small peasant farming, which receives a tremendous impetus as a result of expropriation of landlords' Estates in the interest of the peasantry." But, "the more completely the vestiges of serfdom are destroyed the more rapidly does the disintegration of the peasantry proceed." Such disintegration leads, as has already been said, to small peasant farming, impetus to commodity production and, therefore, "the establishment of the most favourable conditions for the further accomplishment by the working class of its real and fundamental tasks of socialist reorganization."

The Chinese Communist Party appears to have thought that, unless they proceed through the path of small peasant economy and commodity production, it may not be possible for them to do away with the feudal path and abolish what they call "the backward subsistence style of production" because as has been said by another present day Chinese economist, "the socialist system cannot be consolidated on the basis of a subsistence economy."

The Contract-Responsibility System

For this purpose, they introduced the contract responsibility system. This system functions in two ways. (1) Many households sign contracts with the collective for a certain area of farm land, forests, orchard, fish ponds, pasture land, for a processing workshop, with the basic means of production remaining under public ownership. The households are asked to hand over part of their products and income to the collective, while the collective economic organisations control and guide their activities. The households that enter into such contracts are called contracted households. The contracted households are considered part of the collective economy. They are taken to be a form of management of the collective economy and are of a socialist nature.

(2) Some households, however, manage business of, say, poultry farming, pig raising, transport business or trading on their own without the collective providing the basic means of production. They are called self-managing households. They are the owners of their means of production as well as of what they produce. This is certainly independent private peasant economy,

adjusting itself to the prevalent State economy through supply and marketing contracts. But, according to the Chinese, this form of management is a complement of the socialist economy allowed by law to exist as such, a complement to the socialist public ownership. The Chinese do not deny the dangers of capitalist restoration arising from such peasant economy. According to one of them, "the nature of the specialized households is connected closely with politics, economics, law and other social factors. With sound legislation, reasonable tax laws and better social management, specialized households, both contracted and self-managing, and integrated economic operations can play up their strong points while avoiding their weak points, and be helpful to socialism, and maintain their socialist nature. But bad social management and unreasonable distribution of benefits will cause the appearance of a capitalist tendency in the management of the contracted households and the combined operations." The last sentence is important recognizing as it does the risk of emergence of capitalism.

The Chinese claim that this form of contract responsibility system is a new creation by Chinese peasants under the Party's leadership. Under this system the socialist nature of ownership of farm land is maintained but it is contracted to individual peasant household. By this process centralized management is integrated with decentralized management. Decision making, in the days of commune, used to be subjective but that is no longer the position inasmuch as the decision making power is entrusted to the actual producer. "Anything that is suitable for the peasant households should be done by the peasants themselves." According to the Chinese, for effective production the manager and the producer should be one and the same.

The contract responsibility system has also removed egalitarianism, because payment is made according to work done. The habit of "eating from the same big public pot" is done away with. The contract responsibility has also altered family traditions. A report by Mr. Wang Ge appeared in *China Daily*. According to that report which gave the result of survey of 38 families, 27 out of them have set up job responsibility for the members of the family itself and those of the family who work more receive more. According to the survey, the incomes of all the 38 families have risen and in 1983 the income per family rose from 10,000 to 30,000 yuans (1 yuan is equal to Rs. 5 approximately).

The contract responsibility system has given rise to diversified economy. Due to intensive farming by individual peasant households, all the able bodied members of the family may not be required for farming work. They are thus released from agricultural production and accordingly, they switch to other types of work. Individual household farming becoming more efficient, a surplus of labour has been generated. This labour force is taking up new ways of commodity production like local processing industries. The products of their activities get channelized for sale through the net work of rural supply and marketing cooperatives. As reported in *China Daily* by Fei Xiaotong, the sociologists have found that China's recent agricultural development has allowed industries to flourish in small townships. In 1983,

industrial enterprises in Jiangsu's rural township contributed in taxes 1/8th of the Provincial Government Revenue. Moreover, much of the profit of the rural industries go to support agriculture in a big way. In the period from 1979 to 1983, it is calculated that more than 20 per cent of the profits from Jiangsu's rural industry were invested in agriculture and local welfare. Moreover, development of such rural industries has meant that a member of the rural family who is not required for farming is working in such industries. According to statistics, profit from rural industry is responsible for an additional 35 yuans for each rural resident. Such rural industries have also prevented large-scale emigration of work force from the village to the city. During the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe and elsewhere, we witnessed ruination and pauperization of the small peasants and the surplus labour so created emigrated into the cities. Any historian knows about the influx of "vagrabonds" into the cities of England during the Industrial Revolution. These "vagrabonds" in search of employment in towns and cities often became lawless and English law cruelly dealt with them. "Vagrabonds" were often awarded capital punishment. In China's socialist set up, that has not been allowed to happen because surplus labour is finding employment not only in rural industries but also in other branches of diversified economy such as poultry farming, pig raising, etc.

Individual private peasant economy is, therefore, leading in China not to pauperization of surplus labour but is releasing them for industrial growth and development. They are a driving force in the development of commodity economy or commodity production. At present not all of them engage in other forms of agricultural activities like cash crop cultivation, livestock or poultry breeding, fishery, transportation, commerce and service trades. Using new techniques and intensive methods of farming, the peasant households produce more than they need for themselves and market the surplus of their products. In this way, these peasant households have become important suppliers of rural commodities. It is they who are transforming China from a society of sluggish rural economy to a land of large-scale commodity economy.

Over ninety per cent of the peasant households in China, particularly the self-managing ones, are now carrying out the responsibility system of production and are also amassing large wealth and property. Some households are getting rich quick. Questions have been, and are being, asked in China itself on the issue of polarization or the issue of eventual restoration of capitalism if the present responsibility system is encouraged and allowed to flourish. To the question of polarization, the Chinese retort that their aim is to make the people rich. But all the people cannot become rich at the same time and simultaneously. According to Mr. Du, "to let all people eventually get rich, it is necessary to let some get rich first."

Let others get rich gradually. "To prosper together does not mean prospering simultaneously." Again, "The way to rule a country well is to first let the people to get rich quick. Only when the people become well off can the country become powerful."

Mr Du goes on to say, "In our country, the privately owned enterprise is not an independent socio-economic form and so cannot possibly become capitalist because China has a socialist system with political power at the hands of the people. Farm land and other resources are owned either collectively or by the whole people. Big factories and banks are government-controlled so that the economic means are sufficient to keep China's socialist economy in a dominant position."

Mr Du held a Press Conference with foreign reporters and some foreign guests and several questions were addressed to him. To the question whether the new rural economic reform would lead to capitalism, Mr Du answered, "The economic reform is to improve management in the rural areas within a socialist framework. It is only a partial change in policy. It does not make any fundamental change in China's socialist system, so its leading to capitalism is out of the question."

To the question, what is the aim of the rural economic reform, Mr Du answered, "The form underway in China is, first of all, to find a socialist road which is suited to her conditions, namely, a big population and a backward economy. We cannot just copy the experience of other countries."

To indicate what the rural reform has achieved, Mr Du placed in his Press Conference some facts and figures. I quote: "In 112 of the 2000 counties across the country, last year's grain output doubled that of 1978. The average annual per capita income was 270 yuan in 1982. In 1978, some 33 per cent of farm households had an average per capita income of less than 100 yuan, by 1982 this had dropped to 2.7 per cent. Correspondingly the percentage with per capita income above 300 yuan went up from 2.4 in 1978 to 36 in 1982. The per capita value of agricultural products and commodities produced in the countryside in 1982 amounted to 130 yuan or 90 per cent more than in 1978."

To the persistent question whether the responsibility system will not widen the gap between the rich and the poor, that is to say, polarization, Mr Du admitted that the gap sometimes may be quite big. "For instance, the annual income of one family may reach *tens of thousands of yuan*" (emphasis mine). But, according to Mr Du, they cannot use this as capital to exploit others. For, the main means of production, namely, land, water works and large tools and equipments continue to be collectively owned.

Mr Du also admitted that there was hiring of agricultural labour and confessed that it was a new problem, but pointed out that the number of people that could be hired was restricted now to two helpers or five apprentices. He assured, however, that "even though some workers are hired, this can't grow into capitalism on an *equal footing with socialism in China*". (emphasis mine). In elaborating the idea that the contract responsibility system is not the same as small scale individual peasant economy, Mr Du stresses that it is imperative for peasant households to gradually become specialized ones. "We take the degree of division of labour and the level of commodity production as important indicators of a thriving rural economy."

But, as Mr Du himself indicated, permitting some to get rich quick would be of no use unless others, namely, the poor, did also get the opportunity to become rich and well-off. For these poor peasants, Mr Du suggests the panacea of co-operation. At the press conference itself, this question was raised and Mr Du said that such peasants can pool their resources, manpower, funds and technology to operate trades and industries and occupations like mining, transportation, special types of farming and animal husbandry through co-operatives. Such opportunities are available in modern China and, according to Du, "This ability to freely form new enterprise is a great change of very positive significance."

To put it simply and without verbiage, modern China under Deng Xiaoping is in a big way set on the road to modernization and such modernization is being brought about by restoring initiative to individual households and peasants, by encouraging 'capitalist' entrepreneurs though under strict restrictions of 'sound legislation' and 'reasonable tax law'.

Mr Du has rapped on the knuckles the pessimists who are nervously scared by thoughts of possible rise of capitalism. He has said that the contract responsibility system is not to be identified with small scale individual peasant economy. China, according to him, is encouraging diversified economy through *specialized* peasant households, that is to say, through different households engaged in different types of production. In this way the Chinese Communist Party is trying to bring about a gigantic division of labour across the country. We know about division of labour in the era of capitalism between factories and between individual workmen of the same factory. China is introducing division of labour among peasant households, thus pulling up by the roots feudal economy which is based upon self-sufficient and self-reliant and complete production units. By this means of division of labour and thereby an immensely strengthened commodity economy, China dooms to extinction all forms of feudal economy and is effectively extinguishing all vestiges thereof. Moreover, by diversified commodity economy and by guarding the predominantly socialist way of life, the Chinese Communist Party is helping the people of China to skip the stage of capitalism and start off on the road to socialism without any let or hindrance by any "subsistence level of economy" inherited from pre-liberation semi-feudal society.

By developing the job responsibility system, it is hoped by the Chinese experts that agriculture in China will turn from scattered small households into a vast technically advanced business with substantial production. According to a *Xinhua* despatch, the Chinese goal is "that a minority of the Chinese peasants contracting land should be able to provide the country with ample commodity grain, oil, cotton, sugar and other farm produce" and that this should free the large majority of peasants to work in other trades like processing industry, building industry, transport and communication and other new services. In fact, according to statistics, one out of every six peasants in Jiangsu province is now working in rural industry. Jiangsu province has more than 52000 rural enterprises and, in 1983, industrial production reached

15.8 billion yuan, which was 28 per cent of the province's industrial total. In the 1960s, 92 per cent of rural income came from farming and side line production, whereas in 1983, rural industry accounts for 40 per cent of rural income.

The character of the country side is itself changing. Big rural towns are springing up and one can see department stores, cinemas, theatres, hospitals, water works, banks, schools, hotels and gardens in the rural towns.

Steadily, farming is becoming mechanized and, in the first half of 1983 itself, total area under mechanized cultivation was more than 13 million hectares, an increase of 200 thousands hectares over 1982. More than 2000 machines, that could not be used earlier and had to be put in cold storage, were brought back into service. Use of large and medium tractors increased by 19000 or 7.4 per cent, small tractors increased by 63000 or 36.7 per cent. Ninety per cent of small tractors were bought by the peasants themselves. Whereas, in the past, machines like rice transplanters were purchased by the state and collective farms but could not be used due to the apathy of the peasants, now, survey reveals that in a single county, namely, Ningan county, the peasants themselves have bought more than 1000 rice transplanters.

In 1983, China produced for her 1000 million people 387 million tons of grain, 4.6 million tons of cotton, over 10 million tons of oil seeds, 14 million tons of pork, beef and mutton and 5.4 million tons of aquatic products like fish. It is stated that from 1978, agriculture has been switched to high gear. According to statistics, during the period from 1978 to 1983, the annual increase in agricultural output averaged 7.9 per cent, almost 2.5 times the annual increase from 1953 to 1978.

ARUN KUMAR *

The Black Money Report : A Critical Review

THE REPORT on the state of the black economy in India, prepared by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy was released by the Finance Minister, Shri V P Singh, on June 24, 1985. The Report titled, 'Some Aspects of the Black Economy in India' (referred to as the Report in the following) is based on a two year study commissioned by the Government of India. Interestingly, first, only a Summary of the Recommendations and Conclusions was released and only later was the full, Report made available to the public.

The summary of recommendations and conclusions fully vindicated the Government's policies of granting tax concessions to the rich, and the recent changes in the industrial policies in favour of the private sector, (see Kumar, 1985 b). The new 'pragmatism' has thus received support on yet another ground namely, that of helping to curb the evil of black income generation.

However, a detailed reading of the Report indicates that some of the key recommendations and conclusions either do not follow from the research presented and actually go contrary to the findings in the Report or are not at all based on any research contained in the Report. Thus, even though there is a chapter in the Report on the Conclusions and the Recommendations (Chapter XIV) and the summary is apparently based on this chapter, it bears little relationship to the detailed research contained in certain chapters of the Report (particularly, chapters VI and VII), which have a direct bearing on policy related issues. The evidence provided for some of the conclusions and recommendations is entirely of a secondary nature and with little empirical content. Thus, hard evidence in the Report has been ignored in favour of use of guesstimates/qualitative evidence (p. 2).

The recommendations for which no research is contained in the Report include: a) 'suitable adjustments in the value of the rupee (devaluation) and easing of exchange control' (p. 450) b) 'shifting from quantitative import controls and a system of import licenses to regulation through tariffs' (p. 449) c) 'financing of election expenses' (p. 451) d) 'Policies designed to promote

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integrity among senior officials' (p 453) e) 'Measures to bring down the amount of black wealth currently held' (pp 454-458)

The conclusions and recommendations which go contrary to some of the research contained in the Report and are not supported by strong counter evidence are

a) The positive relationship between high tax rates and black income generation and the corollary that a reduction in tax rates would cause black income generation to decline b) High degree of controls and regulations lead to black income generation and a reduction in their intensity or their complexity would lead to the reduction in the size of the black economy. c) The suggestion for relaxation of rent control laws and reduction in Stamp Duties for reduction of black income generation in real estate

There is also a third category of results where errors in calculations or errors in methodology have occurred, thereby putting the results obtained in doubt. One may mention amongst the principal ones the methods used to calculate the size of black incomes generated in (a) legal current activities, [see Kumar (1985 c) for detailed arguments], (b) sale and purchase of immovable property in India, (c) sale and purchase of immovable property in Bombay and Madras

Before presenting the detailed arguments, it would be well to observe that issues related to the rates of taxes or the controls imposed on economic activity have a social basis which cannot be ignored in any discussion on these questions. These issues cannot be viewed narrowly in the context of whether or not they foster the growth of the black economy, admittedly an important social consideration

A discussion of the wider social issues relevant to these questions, like, growth with justice, the need to keep disposable incomes and consumption at low levels to allow Planning a chance, is missing. The view taken in the Report is that if a policy has failed then not only is it necessary to throw it out but even the objectives to be achieved by the policy become dispensable.

Reduction in tax rates

The high tax rate hypothesis may be discussed in two parts. First, whether higher tax rates lead to an increased generation of black incomes. Second, whether a cut in a high tax rate would lead to a decline in the generation of black incomes.

The research done for the Report, in respect of the sugar industry and real estate, indicates that neither a higher tax rate necessarily leads to a higher quantum of generation of black incomes nor a cut in it reduces the generation of black incomes. In the case of sugar industry a time series of evasion of excise duty has been provided (p 212). However, an explanation of this in terms of changes in excise duties has not been attempted. Rather, evasion has been linked to the possibility of successful evasion and the profits earned by the industry (p 216). The conclusion is that profits are channelled from the public to the private coffers of the managements. For this, the rate of tax or its reduction is not material.

In the case of real estate, data from Delhi indicate that high value property facing high rates of taxes (but more specifically high rates of capital gains tax at the time of sale) was found to be under-valued by a far lower percentage than low value property facing lower rates of taxes (p 236). For instance, it was found that at the time of sale, an average property of declared value above Rs 3 lakhs was under-valued between 15 and 50% in a majority of cases. On the other hand, an average property with a declared value of under Rs 50,000 was under valued by upwards of 200% and in many cases even above 400%.

The data thus contradict the high tax rate hypothesis which would have required the high-value properties to be under-valued by far more than the low-value properties. It needs to be mentioned that the data mentioned above was supplied by the Income-Tax department and the percentage under-valuation was calculated by using the *mutual* judgement value of the department and the declared purchase price (p 232). Further, one may also note that the average under-valuation so calculated was much greater than the *final* figures accepted by the department (p 248) *but* much less than the percentage under-valuation indicated in the information collected from the brokers (p 234 and p 238).

The hypothesis that a cut in a tax rate may cause a reduction in the generation of black incomes is also not supported by evidence in the Report. In the case of real estate, the finance Bill, 1977, announced that beginning April 1, 1978 (i.e., one year later), long-term capital gains would be exempt from tax if they were invested in certain specified securities (like, bank deposits). Thus, for a high-value property which has often to pay the highest marginal tax rate, in the year 1978/79, the effective tax rate could have been brought down from 70% to 0%. This amounted to a substantial tax cut as opposed to the case of sugar industry where the excise duty rates change only a few percentage points and may not be expected to have a substantial impact on compliance.

The Income-tax department's data for real estate does not show an unambiguous reduction in the average percentage under-valuation for the year 1978/79 (p 248). One possible explanation is that the other tax rates applicable to properties, like, house tax, wealth tax and stamp duty, were not brought down so that the reduction in one tax rate is by itself not so effective. However, one could expect that the sale of immovable properties could have been postponed from the year 1977/78 to 1978/79 to take advantage of the new provisions. Thus, one could have expected a dip in the number of sales for 1977/78 and a hump for 1978/79 since the provision was withdrawn from 1979. The data from the Ministry of Works and Housing (not presented in the Report but mentioned on p 232) confirms that the pattern displayed by the Income-Tax department data was no fluke.

The assumption in the above argument is that property transactions can be postponed. The question arises whether this is at all plausible? The short answer is yes. The data for Delhi show that during the Emergency years the average number of sales of immovable property dropped dramatically to

about 25% of the average for other years in the Seventies (p 249) The data from Bombay on the monthly sale and purchase of flats (mentioned on p 241) was even more revealing

In July 1982, a provision was introduced in the Income-tax Act to acquire undervalued flats The largest number of such transactions occur in Bombay This number dropped to zero in July 1982 and only gradually recovered to a monthly average of 1,600 in 1984 From the stable trend in 1984, it could be projected that the average number of transactions before July 1982 may have been around 1,300 per month Thus, in the period 1982 to 1984 people did modify their sales pattern

Finally, it needs to be reiterated that capital gains tax on real estate is applicable largely to those investors for whom the property is not meant for personal use but is a means of investment or speculation The reason for this argument is that capital gains on one residential property are exempt from tax if reinvested in a residential property within a specified period Thus, if one is simply changing one's residence, one is unaffected by taxes The real bite of taxation is meant for real estate speculators These people can postpone their transactions

The above arguments indicate that even a massive reduction in the effective tax rate did not produce an impact on the generation of black incomes in real estate However, deterrence seems to have an immediate impact as indicated by the above mentioned Emergency experience and the provision for acquisition of undervalued flats introduced in July 1982

Thus, examples from the Report show that a high tax rate does not necessarily lead to a higher quantum of black income generation (in the case of sugar and real estate), contrary to the suggestion made in the chapter on causes (p 283) It is surprising that after stating that 'studies which quantify the nature of the links between the *level and structure of taxation* and the *extent of evasion* are virtually non-existent in India' (p 274), the relevant analysis in the Report itself is ignored. It must be admitted that the author of the chapter is honest enough to state that when he says that, 'we side with those who believe that high effective rates of taxation are a major contributory factor to tax evasion and black income generation in India,' it is based on 'our judgements and prejudices' Unfortunately, the prejudice has been carried a bit too far and portions of the Report ignored

The major issues in this context, namely, what constitutes a high tax rate and whether we have high tax rates in India have also been left unanswered Data from EARC to show that the combined incidence of income and wealth taxes has been high has been quoted (p 280) However, the norm for defining a high tax rate has not been discussed It would be wrong to conclude that tax rates must be felt to be high because in India we have a large black economy We have not even been able to establish the causal relationship to begin with

In a poor country like India, with a per capita income of Rs 2,200 per annum, the current tax exemption limit, including standard deduction is,

Rs 24,000 The question needs to be asked that when the minimum wages for most areas in the country are under Rs 10 per day (and mostly unenforceable), what ought to be the allowed level of disparity?

These are issues on which the Report is silent. Neither does the Report independently show that tax rates are high nor does it show that a reduction in tax rates would lead to a decrease in black incomes generation in the country and, yet it argues for a reduction in tax rates (pp 442-444) because they are assumed to be 'high'.

One piece of evidence which has been cited in favour of the high tax rate hypothesis is the increase in the 'tax induced demand for cash' (TIDC) as the ratio of total tax revenue to GNP has increased (p 275). However, the evidence is indirect and unclear since there is no simple or obvious relationship with the quantum of black incomes generated (pp 91-93). The 'tax induced demand for cash' is calculated from a currency demand equation (p 79) which contains no variable for increased monetisation of the economy and specially of agriculture. This could easily reduce TIDC. The reduction could have also been achieved by using a time trend. Finally, TIDC for any year ought not to be obtained by comparing the demand for cash when the tax variable is zero and when it is what it is for that year. This is not quite correct since tax evasion is supposed to have costs and black income generation is taken to be absent at a tax rate at which the costs equal the possible benefits from evasion. Further, since the cost of evasion is not fixed over the years, it cannot be taken to be a constant. Thus, TIDC as calculated is likely to be overestimated.

The recommendation for reducing the rates of income taxes also ignores the available data which shows that hardly 1.5 lakh individuals pay an average income tax rate of above 30% (See Kumar, 1985 b). If these individuals are considered to be paying high taxes and, therefore, responsible for all the evasion, then on the basis of the NIPFP estimate, each of these individuals would be earning approximately Rs 25 lakhs in black. In other words, each one of them is declaring only 4% of their true incomes, an improbable situation.

The alternative to this hypothesis is that a large number of black income generators probably completely escape the tax net and remain unaffected by tax rate changes. These people would respond to how strictly the law is implemented and whether deterrence works or not. The example from real estate, given earlier, showed that deterrence seems to work.

Apart from the general recommendation to reduce taxes, the Report suggests a reduction in stamp duties (p. 442). Unfortunately, this suggestion would further encourage black income generation. The reason is that the rate of return from real estate would rise and lead to a new infusion of funds into this sector. This would aggravate price rise in real estate and cause large capital gains to be generated. Not only would this be socially undesirable but would also cause the undervaluation of immovable property to increase. Speculators would be further encouraged to shorten the period of holding their investments and cause prices to rise even more. **Data from Delhi and**

Bombay suggest that when the rate of transaction in real estate has decreased, capital appreciation has slowed down or even become negative. The recent speculative boom in the share market suggests that something similar could also happen in the case of real estate.

The next set of recommendations is on controls (pp 441-451). The thrust clearly is on making the economic climate conducive to the functioning of the private sector. Clearly, the private sector has been depicted as a victim of a corrupt political and bureaucratic system (for example, see pp 26-28). The idea that the private sector may have a symbiotic relationship with politicians and bureaucrats has not been considered.

It has not struck the author of the Report that the private sector finances the election of the 'corrupt' politicians and could have turned off the financial taps if it had wanted to. The reason why growing corruption has been tolerated by the system has not been investigated. A consideration of the obvious answer that the private sector in India may have been a substantial beneficiary of corruption and of the black economy has been left out in the Report. Politicians may be considered to be agents of the private sector in India not simply because money is given for elections but because there may be ideological compatibility between the two.

Even though it is stated that the first requirement for tackling 'the problem of black income generation is clean administration at least at the level of political authority and top senior servants' (p 441), the related issues are not discussed in the Report. Simple solutions like, promoting integrity among senior officials by increasing their remuneration and introducing a system of rewards and punishments do not seem to be based on any integrated approach. If to do one's assigned job, one has to be given an incentive in addition to a salary, one would end up in a situation where no one in the country would work. The suggestion is not based on any well thought out plan based on wages and incomes policy linked to the level of skills, etc.

The important thing about controls in the economy is that there is a social basis to them. Nobody would deny that where a control loses its social relevance, it should be given up. The operative difference between this position and the one adopted in the Report (p 451) is that one cannot have a blanket recommendation that controls must be removed.

Each control is supposed to serve a specific social purpose and may have associated with it specific mechanisms for the generation of black incomes. Thus, there cannot be a blanket recommendation to remove controls. There have to be specific prescriptions based on an adequate case by case analysis. One may give examples from the Report itself.

In the case of sugar industry, the observed pattern of evasion of excise duty does not show any relationship with the degree of controls on sugar prices and its marketing (p 223). The highest estimated amount of evasion was found not during periods of complete control but during periods of decontrol. The example presented from cement industry (p 48) to support the move for removal of controls, is not based on any detailed analysis. Other

commodity studies mentioned in the Report (p 25) are unable to comment on the subject since they do not have time series data which could link the changes in controls to changes in black incomes generation

In the case of real estate, the rent control laws are held responsible for the generation of black incomes, through payments of *pugree* or rents under the table. However, the Report also notes that this is not always the case (see fn p 226). Thus, the recommendation for 'relaxing rent control laws' and allowing a 'gradual upward adjustment of controlled rent' (p 450) is not based on adequate analysis

Three things are ignored, namely, why have the rents gone up, what is the social basis of rent control laws and should the social objective behind these laws be given up. Rents have gone up rapidly since the Fifties because of the developing shortage of housing in the country. The social obligation of employers to provide housing has not been recognised. The misuse of space by businesses, whether in the private or public sector, has grown since the high rents paid by them are treated as costs and reduce the taxable incomes only marginally. That they are insensitive to high rents is borne out by the fact that most of them do not enforce the provisions of law regarding the fixing of standard rent. The standard rent is based on the actual value of cost of construction and the value of land on the day construction started. Thus, it is much less than the market rent.

The private sector which is supposed to be always desirous of cutting costs seems not to care and for the public sector, it is even worse. On the one hand, the Government loses money because it is paying high rents and on the other hand, it receives taxes on the basis of standard rent and once again loses revenue. The competition for properties, amongst public agencies like, banks, insurance agencies and public sector companies, is known to drive up rents and property values.

Enforcement of standard rent provision would immediately bring down property prices and allow public agencies to buy space for the same money that they now spend on rentals. Rents would also come down if the public sector agencies adopt common policies for renting space rather than engaging in mutual competition.

In a situation of rapidly rising prices of real estate, the landlords would like their properties to be vacated by their tenants as often as possible. Not only does this cause harassment to the tenants, it also causes financial hardships and affects their standard of living. It is at times suggested that tenants may be well-off while landlords may be poor and in need of protection. The case of landlords who are retired or who may be widows is often quoted.

It is undoubtedly true that many landlords face harassment and virtually lose their properties. However, it needs to be remembered that as a class, the landlords are better-off than tenants since property is concentrated in their hands. Further, the rise in property values, the capital gain accruing to properties, is a windfall to the landlord. A large share of the capital gain is a result

of social processes like improved infrastructure, urbanisation, etc

Thus, if one looks at the social basis for the existence of the rent control laws, they are still needed. As such, the solution to the complex problem of landlord-tenant relationship is not the removal of the rent control laws from the statute books. A slowing down of price rise in real estate through large scale construction in the cooperative sector and the public sector, through recognition of obligation of employers to provide housing, etc, is a precondition to elimination of rent control laws. In fact, price and rent stability would make these laws redundant.

It may be argued that corruption in public agencies dealing with housing, like DDA in Delhi or the Public Works Departments, is rampant. This is undoubtedly true but needs to be dealt with rather than becoming the excuse for giving up socially desirable objectives. The reasons for the decline in standards of public administration need to be looked into. The failure of checks and balances in administration needs to be understood and acted upon. It may be linked both to the political processes and their fall in relative terms down the incomes ladder (See Kumar, 1985a). Thus, the solution may lie not in simply raising incomes of top officials but in implementing an incomes and wages policy.

The Report, by suggesting that controls be removed without going deeper into the relevant social issues and by going against the logic of some of its own contents, once again forces the conclusion that we are again left with the judgements and prejudices of the author.

Some of the errors in calculations and in methodology that have arisen in the Report have already been referred to. For instance, the calculation and the interpretation of TIDC (Tax induced demand for cash) has been commented upon. A major error in the estimation of the size of the black economy in India has arisen because of the problem with the income distribution data. It has been pointed out that if the distribution of incomes is not correct then the total of taxable incomes out of the reported GDP cannot be accurately calculated and the size of the black economy remains a function of the assumptions made. Further, it is not clear how illegal sector incomes (smuggling, bribes, etc) ought to be dealt with and there is a danger of double counting (see Kumar, 1985c).

In addition, in the case of real estate, various errors have arisen. The calculations of the black incomes generated by sale of flats in Bombay city has adopted a very low declared value. The Bombay data indicate that the average value of a flat sold in Bombay between July 1982 and upto 1984 comes out to be 4 times the figure used in the calculations in the Report (p 240). It is interesting to note that while for Delhi, for the year 1982/83, the sale of immovable properties generated Rs 216 crores in black, for Bombay, the figure turns out to be about Rs 58 crores (p 233 and 240). This seems highly improbable.

One other reason for this low figure is that the black amount has been calculated by using the broker information (on black ratios) for Bombay and

Madras The justification presented for doing so is that 'the sample information from the market sources was grossly inadequate' (p 239) The question to be asked is that if for Delhi, out of a total of 5,000 annual transactions, information could be obtained only for 20, then for Bombay, whether information on 5 to 10 properties out of an average annual number of 500 can be considered to be inadequate The market information also indicates that in the case of Bombay because of the high *pugrees* involved and in the case of Madras due to the existence of the State advised guideline values for land, the black percentages are very high in the sale of immovable properties

The calculation of the total amount of value of real estate annually being transacted in the country also suffers from a number of methodological errors For instance, the Report estimates the value of property transacted in each State, using the data on Stamp duty and registration fees (p 716) It is intriguing that for important states like Maharashtra, West Bengal and Bihar, the value of transactions was significantly lower in 1980/81 compared to 1975/76 It is also unclear how the equation used for estimation (p 417) can be relied upon when the average rate of tax may vary across states and across years (as the weight of various components changes) Other related methodological problems are discussed in Kumar (1985c)

In conclusion, one is forced to say that in spite of the many new contributions of the Report, it has to be characterised by its political bias in favour of the private sector Unfortunately, even this is not adequately argued out and causes contradictions do emerge in the Report Thus, a Report commissioned by the Government to give a new direction to thinking on the subject confuses issues further and instead of becoming a national document remains someone's judgements and prejudices

- 1 Kumar, A. 1985a The Chequered Economy in Black and White (Review of 'The Black Economy in India' by K N Kabra) *Economic and Political Weekly* March 30
- 2 ——— 1985b Budget 1985-86 Haves Have While Have Nots Nought *Economic and Political Weekly* April 20
- 3 ——— 1985c. Sizing up the Black Economy Estimate—Some Issues Raised by the NIPFP Methodology, Mimeo
- 4 National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), 1985 *Some Aspects of the Black Economy in India* New Delhi

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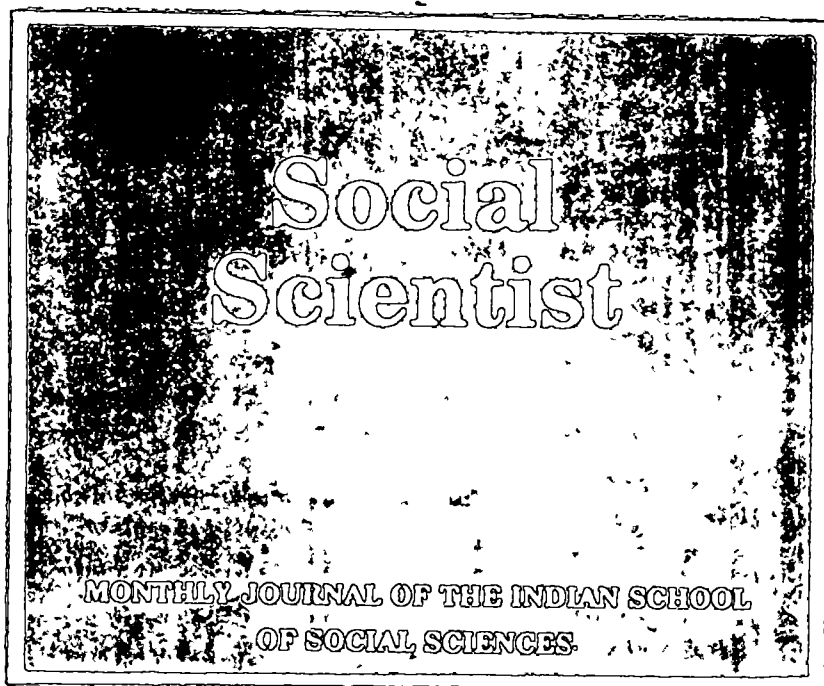
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Editorial Note

A SEPARATE and distinct women's movement on women's issues *per se* is certainly of recent origin in our country. Women of course had participated in large numbers in the anti-colonial and anti-feudal struggles and this participation had been mediated through separate women's organisations, which had also taken up several women's issues; but these issues had been taken up in order to facilitate women's participation in *these* struggles. Women's problems as such were never the focus of attention of these organisations of women. Likewise, while within the trade unions and other similar organisations, there have been struggles relating to demands of say, women workers, struggles not confined to such general questions as wages, but encompassing specific issues which arise from the fact that the workers concerned were women, these struggles too fall into a different category altogether from struggles over women's issues as such. The growth of a separate movement, a separate set of organisations, dealing with the latter class of questions implies a recognition of the existence of this class of questions as a distinct entity, that there are such things as women's issues as opposed to issues involving women workers, or women agricultural labourers, etc.

This is an important development, which enjoins upon the Left and democratic movement the responsibility *inter alia* of equipping itself theoretically to come to terms with these issues. There is no gainsaying the fact that a movement organised by women on women's issues cannot make much headway without being integrally linked with the Left and democratic movement, similarly however, the advance of the Left and democratic movement requires that it relate itself to the movement on women's issues, and for this a correct theoretical perspective on women's issues is essential. That there is much theoretical haziness in this terrain even in advanced capitalist countries, where there have been lively and intense discussions on women's issues for some time now, is obvious. Even among Marxists in the West, who not only are far removed from the tendency which accords primacy to gender-based exploitation over class-exploitation, but are also free from the opposite view of simply subsuming women's struggles under class-struggles and denying them any separate identity, important differences exist on practical issues, e.g., the demand of "wages for housework", which are rooted in major theoretical differences. Angela Davis' book *Women, Race and Class* for instance, argued that "wages for housework" is based on a wrong theoretical premise and that the housewife is not a secret worker inside the capitalist production process, an argument which many sharing Davis' general outlook, have found unconvincing.

This of course, is not to suggest that these particular issues are necessarily going to become issues of practical importance for us, the point is simply to underscore the theoretical haziness which surrounds discussion, even among Marxists, on women's issues. For some clarity to be acquired in

this complex subject, it is important that there should be wide-ranging and intense discussion on its several aspects. The current double-number of *Social Scientist* which is devoted exclusively to themes connected with the position of women in our country, seeks to initiate such a discussion. It is a measure of the importance which we attach to this question as a practical problem facing the Left and democratic movement.

With this issue of *Social Scientist* we also start a new practice. The issue has been planned, put together and edited by Meera Velayudhan, who kindly agreed to act as a guest editor for this special number. We intend in future to invite from time to time particular persons, outside of our editorial board, who may be specialists in particular areas, to act as guest editors for issues which we would like to publish and which fall within their specific areas of interest. We hope in this way to widen our circle of contributors and to make *Social Scientist* better represent the current state of research in diverse fields.

NINA RAO*

The Woman Question : Perspectives for Today

AT THE END of the U N Decade for Women, there is widespread recognition of the unequal distribution of power, but the shift from Mexico to Nairobi is clearly an expression of viewing the Woman Question within the broader framework of class inequality rather than merely gender inequality. This is so because to-day the pre-eminent position of world capitalism and Neo-colonialism is being swept aside by the advances made by the world socialist movement and the National Liberation struggles, which have taken their cue on the genius of women from the lessons of those countries where the victory of socialism has been the victory of the oppressed sex also. In the 60's, European and North American feminists began to look for 'heros' and strategies, and naturally turned to the experience of the Bolshevik party. Kollantai's work was reprinted, although with a feminist bias,¹ and other radical women in the party and their experience was also publicised.² But in the 80's, the question of sex equality in socialist countries became a divisive issue, both in terms of theory and organisation.³ Whilst recognising that socialism has given to women legal equality (without qualifications), with universal participation in paid economic activity, increased their enrolment in post secondary education and professional occupations, besides providing maternity and child care facilities, they have also looked at negative features like concentration of female workers in low paid or non-preferred jobs, discrimination in hiring, pay and promotion, conflict between maternal and work roles, discrepancy in leisure time and activities, and the prevalence of traditional attitudes of male supremacy. As a result, the North American Feminists, and some European groups have rejected an alignment with socialism as the path to sex equality in western capitalist societies. Although these 'empirical analysts' admit that the statistical base for their rejection is 'patchy', they nevertheless reject Marxism and Socialism as practised in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union, more on political grounds than on the basis of any familiarity with the problem, as we shall see later.⁴

On the other hand, the inequality of women in most 'third world' countries, stems from mass poverty and general backwardness, which is a product of imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and unjust economic relations in the international sphere. To this may be added the effect of war, which has,

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not surprisingly, strengthened the anti-imperialist feelings of the people in these countries, and revived the democratic content of the women's movement⁵ Here we see that the aspirations of the women's movement are quite divergent from those in North America and Western Europe, although feminists in these countries also have attempted to raise divisive issues, which mobilise some sections of the urban middle and upper-middle class women, but such groups remain sectarian, without making any contribution other than the 'visibility' of the woman's cause⁶ The primary theoretical issue that arises between Marxists and Feminists is one of definition Are women a 'class', in struggle against 'androcentric' assumptions regardless of the struggle between workers and capitalists, under the capitalist mode of production? Does the male vs female concept, which is central to the feminist theory as a potential area of conflict, indicate that unity between men and women in the common struggle for peace, freedom and equality is an audacious assumption?

Although the concept of social class has become a widely used analytical term, it is not always used with a common understanding In much sociological literature, class is defined either by a) social grading-by skills, income groups etc , or b) by convention, occupation or profession⁷ Marxists understand class to mean the relations of production that predominate in a given mode of production For Marxism, therefore, a sex category cannot operate independently of its members' class affiliation and in politics also it cannot transcend antagonistic relations between classes Marxism recognises that a sex category cannot possess the structural conditions to achieve solutions which surpass the limitations of the system, and therefore cannot be considered the social force which has the greatest subversive impact On the question of social and civil rights, which are compatible with the system, sex categories may show cohesion and unity, but they do not constitute a 'historic mission' Their social and political actions must therefore be limited in scope and achievement⁸ Any attempt to raise a sex category beyond its structural position and orientation is to preserve the status quo, in terms of the division of society into social classes, and the domination of one class by another That is why Lenin wrote in Pravda (Nov 6, 1919)⁹ that neither legal democracy, nor equality or freedom from the guardianship of men was possible unless the focus of the oppressed sex was on the following questions

- a) Equality between what sex and what other sex?
- b) Between what nation and what other nation?
- c) Between what class and what other class?
- d) Freedom *from* what yoke or from the yoke of what class?
- Freedom *for* what class?

For the Marxist therefore, the inseparable connection between the social and human position of the women and private property in the means of production, is only clearly brought out by the concept of class

The feminist argument leads further to the 'domestic' mode of produc-

tion (should a wife be classified in the husband's class even though her skills and occupation put her above or below him, or even if she is only a housewife?) The so-called domestic mode of production centres around the housework of the mother which creates the institution of the family. The commodity, labour power, is created in the framework of personal relations with no contract regarding the regulation, working time or remuneration of domestic duties. The family and particularly the female members produce what they cannot commercialise. The cost of producing labour power does not find a place in the capitalist accounting system. Yet by mobilising this unpaid labour, capitalism assures itself of a supply of labour power and the institution of the family helps to transmit the ideological justification for the dominant class without which the continuity of the capitalist mode cannot be maintained. Here the confusion relates to seeing the production of labour power by the family as simple commodity production (is the wife free to market her husbands' labour power, because she is the owner of it?) and opposing simple commodity production to capitalist production.¹⁰ Marxism is very clear on this subject also. Privileges are related to the ownership of property. Where capitalism exists, men will retain their privileges. Even where political liberty exists, toilers are in conditions of poverty and wage slavery, women are in a position of double slavery. Their demands have therefore led the Women's movement to historically mobilise around issues like the right, with men, to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, state protection of the interests of the mother and child, state aid to mothers of large families (to remove link between motherhood and poverty) or unmarried mothers, maternity leave with full pay and the provision of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens. Linked with legislation that confers equal citizenship and suffrage rights, we are again led back to class struggle in the given mode of production, where specific class antagonisms exist. Even where quantification or the monetary equivalent of female domestic labour has shown the value of domestic drudgery, it does not alter the facts that the labour power so produced cannot be commercialised and included in the capitalist accounting system. This question is further complicated by the indispensable requirement of an industrial reserve army to ensure a higher rate of exploitation, as well as the relationship between the capitalist mode of production and pre-capitalist pockets, where the pre-capitalist pockets are either absorbed into the wage-exploitation system, or marginalised.

Here Feminists accuse Marxists of falling into 'androcentric fallacies', that all families have to have a head, and the head of the family has to be a male.¹¹ Therefore, the struggle between the workers and the capitalists is not the only struggle, since there is no complementary relationship between the man's wage and the women's domestic labour.¹² Such arguments deny basic contradictions like 'do all women relate to all men in the same way?' 'Are all women oppressed in the same way?' The answer that the very dependence of women on the way in which individual men treat them, is the source of sex oppression, has already moved far away from the truth.

For the Marxist, there is a clear line of demarcation from the feminist. The woman question is a part of the social question of the workers problem, the proletarian class struggle and the revolution ¹³ The women's movement must be a part of the general mass movement, not only of the proletariat but of all the exploited and the oppressed, all the victims of capitalism or any other mastery. There cannot be a genuine mass movement without women. To achieve this, there has to be systematic work amongst women, so that they may be equipped for the class struggle, to remove unpolitical, unsocial and backward psychology, to remove their isolation and to change their manner of life. Here again the Women's Movement has expressed this understanding by demanding that domestic slavery, petty housework, which strangles, stultifies and degrades women, can only be transformed by a mass struggle that transforms the petty domestic economy into a large-scale socialist economy (public dining rooms, creches, K G's etc) not as profit making enterprises, but created with the best organisational talent, to ensure full participation by women ¹⁴ We now come to the question of 'manner of life'. Feminists accuse Marxists of being unable to explain how property became the privilege of men 'naturally', as a consequence. Marxists cannot accept the possibility of a class antagonism that is not economically derived. For the feminist, the ruling class is that which derives its power through the exploitation of the oppressed class, and this antagonism need not be economically derived. Further, Marxists are unable to give reasons for the necessity of the 'patriarchal' form of the family, or the reasons for family harmony ¹⁵ Throughout history, one of the basic factors causing inequality has been the division of labour between the sexes. The reproductive functions have restricted women to the domestic sphere, for which reason they have been treated as inferior, and their rights have been violated. The cumulative effect has been limited access to resources and participation in all spheres of life, particularly decision making ¹⁶ Do we see this discrimination as the result of productive systems, or the result of women being the reproductive force? Marxists understand that it is clearly the role of private property that has transformed women's 'industry' into mere drudgery and in this process of transformation, has reduced the woman's main function to that of reproduction. The proof of the role of property relations is in the dialectics of history, which is not the special preserve of Marxists.

With the overthrow of private property, the proletarian family has nothing to pass on and therefore the need for male domination will also be overthrown. There may be a cultural lag in overcoming historical attitudes, but the proletarian state does not need to base itself on exploitation, or its ideological justification. This is evident not only in the socialisation of the means of production, but also in relation to interaction between the sexes.

Marxists identify three forms of marriage corresponding to three stages of human development.

a) group marriage—savagery—sexual freedom for women,

- b) pairing marriage—barbarism—reducing the sexual freedom of women,
- c) Monogamy—civilisation—reducing further the sexual freedom, (supplemented by adultery, prostitution, polygamy)—of women.

If the basis of monogamy was the immense concentration of wealth in the hands of a single individual, a man, and the need to bequeath this wealth to his children, monogamous woman was necessary. Where the single family is no longer the economic unit, house-keeping has been socialised, education is publically provided, along with socialised care of children, complete monogamy can be realised (for both men and women). That is why the Proletarian state is said to be the basis for gender equality and not simply because Marxism is full of 'mere assumptions'. Individual marriage, based on individual sex-love, will be brought about by women, who will no longer be afraid of the moral and economic consequences of sexual intercourse, nor will they be concerned for the means of their existence or the future of their children. We see, therefore, that the supremacy of man and indissolubility of marriage, which had their origin in property relations, will finish once these property relations are finished¹⁷.

Feminists seem to be unable to distinguish between political evils and economic evils. Certain economic evils are inherent under capitalism, no matter what the political superstructure. To abolish them requires the overthrow of the capitalist system. Political evils are departures from democracy, which is economically quite possible under capitalism, but, what is democracy 'in general' and democracy 'under capitalism'? It is usually the case that oppressed classes cannot exercise their democratic rights, the oppressed sex is crushed economically, workers and peasants are downtrodden and the sovereignty of the people is limited to an 'alliance between the Stock Exchange and the Government'¹⁸. Should we therefore throw out these rights since they are 'useless', or should we utilise them to build mass struggles? The Feminist movement today may be grouped as follows:

Socialist Feminists—'the system is the problem'

Marxist-Feminist—division of labour confines women

Equal Rights—prejudice and unequal opportunities for women

Althusserian—Category of Feminine is the reason for subordination

Humanist—Alienation from traditional roles

Unaligned—Feminine role expectations

Wages for Housework—exploitation, not oppression

Radical Feminists—'Men are the problem'

Feminist Revolutionaries—oppression and exploitation due to housework and child care

Red stockings—male supremist, capitalist, imperialist

Cultural feminist—isolation of women source of their inferiority

Female Supremacist—women are biologically and morally superior, men hold power by force

(Source: Sebastyen, 1979)

Feminists have recognised the need for leadership on the Woman's Question. Historically, the movement had looked to Socialism for answers, but the tendency to give culture and gender more significance in politics, and to minimise the significance of class, is a political commitment, and must be exposed as such. The mainstream of Historical Materialism has consistently identified the domination of women by men as a part of the domination of specific classes, races, ethnic groups and peoples. It has never seen the confrontation of women's history with main-stream history, only the interconnections. Gender identities and role differentiation are not seen as natural emanations of sexual differences, but as ingrained in social and economic formations and the class relations that they give rise to. The variation, in time and space, in gender-specific allocation of forms of labour, attributes and values, demonstrate that there has never been any 'universal' oppression of women or any 'universal' domination by men.

Whilst Marxists agree that functionalism (the need for a stable social order and the assumption of consensus for the nuclear family as a necessity for individual functional needs) and Biological theories (all social behaviour is ultimately derived from Biology, therefore social relations are conditioned by reproduction), have obvious limitations, we do not agree that the men who perpetuated the outrages against women were misogynists. They were representatives of classes and sought to expand the power of the class they represented.

To identify women with the family is not to reduce women to functional necessity, but to see the family as the basic unit of production and governance. History has shown us how many forms the family can take, and therefore, how many forms the relations between man and woman can take. As a result, dominant classes have promoted distinct family policies. The feminist ideology is clearly in line with the view of sovereignty as an emanation of the autonomy of the individual and his absolute property rights. For them, economic transformations and the law have constrained women from achieving this individual autonomy and realising their equality. On the contrary, the bourgeois revolution (often described as urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation) brings about specific changes in the lives of women, as it does in the lives of the working people. It has consolidated capitalist social relations. Its ideology, bourgeois individualism, while it offers greater potential for independence and equality, than previous class relations, this potential remains unrealised. The material base for the potential lies in the developments in Science, Technology & Medicine, Education and Urbanisation. The inability to translate theoretical possibilities for women's emancipation into practice, results from the economic structure of advanced capitalism and not only from custom and tradition. Capital needs to extract surplus and it profits from the oppression of women. Although bourgeois society did not invent 'separate spheres' for men and women, it certainly promoted the idea for obvious reasons. Now we see feminists arguing for regaining the fruits of individualism without understanding its limitations within the system. That is why they are not able to work out an

'original' theoretical framework for feminism that does not partake of other theoretical considerations. Whilst rejecting the predominant theories, but particularly Marxism, their criteria is how useful is it to search for an original cause for the oppression of women, outside of the benefit men derive from this form of subordination? This search will be the determining factor for the development of 'modern' feminist theory, in the cause of the 'class' of oppressed women.

We can now see which are the main areas of dispute between Feminists and Marxists, regardless of their sex. The broad table above indicates where there is room for understanding, if the doubts expressed are genuine and not disruptive or anti-communist. The implications for the Women's Movement are clear. Gender inequality cannot be separated from class inequality, and the solution to gender antagonisms are associated with class antagonisms, which can only be overthrown with the abolition of the Capitalist system. In terms of organisation, the Women's Movement must be firmly grounded in mass and class organisations, which must draw in all other toiling and oppressed sections. The feminist movement, by its expression of individualism has divided the International Women's Movement, but the debate it has generated has helped in bringing back into theoretical focus the nature of the inequality that we see around us. However, more than the debate, it is the practical experience of the organised women's movement that has vindicated Marxist theory.

- 1 Alexandra Kollontai: *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Woman*. Introduction by German Greer, Orbach and Chambers, London 1972
- 2 Vera Zasulich, Praskovia Ivanovskaia, Olga Liubavovich Elisabeth Kovalskaia, etc
- 3 Jancar (1978), Lapidus (1978), McAuley (1981), Lane (1982)
- 4 A. Heitlinger (1983) *Womens Studies International Forum*, 1985
- 5 We have the varied experiences of Vietnam, P.L.O., S.W.A.P.O. Polisario etc., to learn from
- 6 U. Butalia, 1985 *Womens Studies International Forum*, 1985
- 7 Ann Oakley, "Subject Woman", Jane Lewis, "Debate on Sex and Class, *New Left Review* Jan-Feb '85
- 8 Saffioti, —Women, Mode of Production, and Social Formations *Latin American Perspectives* Issue 12, 13, 1977
- 9 *Women and Communism*. Selections from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Lawrence and Wishart, 1950
- 10 C. Meillassoux *Maidens, Meat and Money*. Capitalism and the Domestic Community, Cambridge University Press, 1981
- 11 Scarlett Freidman *Heterosexuality, Couples and Parenthood* a 'natural' cycle (mimeo), 1983

12 Meredith Tax The United Front of Women, *Monthly Review* Vol 32, No 5, 1980

13 Lenin on the Woman Question by Clara Zetkin, in *Women and Communism*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1950

14 Rate of female Activity (O L O , 1970)

Spain	24%	Hungary	73%
Portugal	25%	Rumania	73%
Italy	29%	Bulgaria	74%
FRG	49%	GDR	80%
Denmark	58%	Soviet Union	82%
Sweden	59%	Finland	63%

15 Elizabeth Fox, Placing Women s History in History, *New Left Review*, May-June '82

16 *Towards Equality Report of the Committee on the Status of Women*, Government of India, 1975

17 F Engels, *Orgin of the Family*, Ch 2

18 Lenin, *A Caricature of Marxism*, 1916

BALAJI PANDE*

Women's Education

THE DECADE 1975-85 was observed the world over as Women's Decade as per U N General Assembly's resolution in 1975, at Mexico. The object of this paper is to highlight women's situation in the educational front in India during this decade.

The Indian educational system as well as other aspects of development by and large are the legacy of the colonial past. The reason for this predominance of the Raj on the country's policies and planning even after Independence could be linked with the historical conditions under which India achieved freedom, i.e., to the fact that independence was achieved through a national movement led by a powerful alliance of the landlords and capitalists which could not deliver the necessary historical blows to bring radical social transformation. After independence, the country's leadership came into the hands of nationalist leaders many of whom were greatly influenced by western liberal ideology. Besides, the unequal relations with imperialism continued. Thus the institutions and values prevailing under the Raj not only remained intact but also led to the import of new ideas unsuitable to Indian conditions. The cumulative effect was that India failed to evolve its own independent policies and education, a crucial agency for development, continued to play the role envisaged by Lord Macaulay¹ way back in the early 19th century.

The colonial education policy promoted both imperialist and feudal values so as to strengthen and consolidate their rule. The benefits of this policy could only reach to a small section of those people suitable to the alien rulers and also to those who could be involved in the smooth running of the colonial administration as well as to extend support to strengthen and consolidate their power. This point could be substantiated by the fact that when the British left India only about 16 per cent of the total population were literate—an achievement of 112 years of colonial education policy since Macaulay's famous Minutes.

In the post-independence period, after 35 years of "planned" development in the country, the literacy rate has just reached nearly 36 per cent, a rate of increase of only 1 per cent per year. Of these nearly 13 per cent have

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never received any formal education, 11 per cent have studied upto primary and 6 per cent upto middle level

That there has not been a significant improvement in the educational sector can be related to the fact that there has been a constant reduction in the proportion of Plan allocations for Education in relation to the total plan outlay and which has also evaded the recommendation of the Education Commission (1964-66)² at any time during the plan periods. The table below indicates the shocking state of expenditure on education in the different plans.

Table I
PROPORTION OF ALLOCATION FOR EDUCATION TO THE TOTAL ALLOCATION IN DIFFERENT PLANS

<i>Plans</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Centre</i>	<i>State</i>
1st Plan	—	7.6%	4.9	8.7
2nd Plan	—	5.8%	2.7	9.2
3rd Plan	—	6.8%	4.1	10.6
4th Plan	—	5.0%	3.1	7.8
5th Plan	—	3.4%	2.0	3.5
6th Plan	—	2.6%	1.6	4.6

SOURCE: Plan Documents, Planning Commission, Government of India.

Sectoral allocation to education during these plan periods indicates that there has been calculated cuts at the elementary level which is supposed to be free and compulsory, whereas at the higher level considerably more amounts have sanctioned. This indicates the elitist approach of the education planners towards educational development. The table below indicates that allocations at the elementary level has reduced from 56 per cent in the 1st plan to 36 per cent in the 6th plan. The lowest was 28.5 per cent in the 4th plan, whereas at the university level this has increased from 9 per cent to 16 per cent and the highest being 23 per cent in the 5th plan.

Table II
SECTORIAL ALLOCATION TO EDUCATION (IN PERCENTAGE)

	<i>1st plan</i>	<i>2nd plan</i>	<i>3rd plan</i>	<i>4th plan</i>	<i>5th plan</i>	<i>6th plan</i>
Elementary	56	35	30	28.5	32	36
Secondary	13	19	18	14.4	19	16
University	9	18	15	22.3	23	19
Other (General)	9	16	16	19.6	10	15
Total General	87	82	79	84.8	85	86
Technical	13	18	21	15.2	12	14
Grand Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

SOURCE: Plan Documents, Planning Commission Govt. of India.

Though there has been a sharp reduction in the proportion of allocation for elementary level the fourth All India Educational Survey conducted by

NCERT in 1978 reported that 3000 primary schools have no teachers at all, only 9 per cent of primary schools have 5 teachers, more than half of the primary schools are in thatched houses or open spaces, one-third have no mats, benches etc, 40 per cent have no blackboards, 70 per cent have no books and 85 per cent schools have no toilet facilities

Another feature of the post-independence educational development is the existence of non-government educational institutions in large numbers resulting in massive disparity of standards. The Education Commission (1964-66) reported that nearly 33 per cent of the total educational institutions were non-governmental. The table below indicates the proportion of non-governmental institutions in states and at different stages

Table III

Percentage of non-governmental Educational Institutions to total number of Institutions

<i>State</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Stage or section</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Andhra Pradesh	8.0	Pre-primary	70.9
Assam	19.1	Lower Primary	22.2
Bihar	74.0	Higher Primary	27.1
Gujarat	36.0	Secondary	69.2
Jammu & Kashmir	1.7	Vocational Schools	57.4
Kerala	61.7	Special Schools	79.0
Madhya Pradesh	4.6	Institutions for Higher Education	78.8
Maharashtra	48.0	(General)	
Karnataka		Colleges for professional	
(Mysore)	34.3	Education	49.9
Orissa	65.3	Colleges for special Education	74.9
Punjab	7.4	Total for all sectors	33.2
Rajasthan	3.5		
Uttar Pradesh	14.5		
West Bengal	36.3		
Total for INDIA	33.2		

SOURCE Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66

Post-independence educational development in the country has created a large force of educated job seekers uprooted from their traditional workplace rather than bringing people into the field of the educational system so as to enable them to participate in the process of nation building. This force is increasing steadily. The consequences of such a phenomenon could be seen in the rising number of student and youth unrest all over the country. So, 'Education is reduced to a commodity and is sold to the highest bidder at a vast profit. Education is geared to the employment market and examinations are used to eliminate young people rather than test their knowledge. That successive governments of India have abandoned the spheres of education to profiteers is obvious from the fact that plan expenditure on education has declined from 7.6 per cent in the First Plan to little over two per cent now. And this when almost every report on education since 1920s including those of Gandhi and Vishweshwarayya have called for a

minimum 10 per cent expenditure on education”³

II

The Women's Decade in India began in 1975 with an official report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India,⁴ which is even today a basic document on women economic, social, political conditions. In the area of education, the major problems identified by the Committee were (a) illiteracy, (b) widening gap in access to elementary education, (c) problems of non-enrolment wastage and drop-out, (d) imbalances in educational developments, (e) ideological imbalances among educational planners and administrators regarding the objectives of women's education.

The Committee had recommended several measures to improve women's education such as provision of schools within walking distance, child care centres with schools to enable elder sisters to look after their siblings instead of staying at home to do so, abolition of single teacher schools and provision of women teachers in all schools, free education for girls upto secondary stage, systematic campaign for value and importance of girls, provision of incentives (mid-day meals, free uniforms, scholarships, enrolment awards) etc. Most of these recommendations were accepted by the Empowered Committee of the Government of India.⁵ Following the U N General Assembly's resolution on the World Plan of Action during the decade 1975-85, the Government of India prepared a National Plan of Action for Women in 1977.⁶

The Plan outlined the following objectives for women's education -

- a) "To prepare women to fully participate in socially productive work, and to be fully aware of family planning needs with a view to achieving her full integration with the democratic and developmental efforts of the country,
- b) To help break down overt and covert biases against women,
- c) To make women aware of the various legal, social and economic rights, provisions and privileges available to them and of the way they can take advantage of them for their advancement,
- d) To enable women to be self-reliant to achieve economic independence
- e) To impart the idea of equality between the sexes and participation by women in development through the education system,
- f) Above all, to find full expression for her talent, ability and personality and for this purpose, enable her to adopt a discriminating attitude so that she can escape the bonds of superstition and obscurantism "

*The Draft National Policy on Education*⁷ admitted that although education had expanded in all sectors yet imbalances and inequalities continued to exist. The document mentioned that girls, scheduled castes and tribes, landless labourers, backward classes and urban slum poor generally continue to

lag behind in education and "special efforts must be made to identify the problems of these cases and to bring all such people into the fold of education"

The Sixth Five Year Plan * for the first time included a chapter on "Women and Development" The chapter deals with the efforts required in the different welfare and development sectors (education, employment and health) for women, though no separate outlays were suggested

The Plan, in order to promote literacy and education among women, directed its strategy towards higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools, income generating work for girls outside the school to supplement the daily income, increase in the number of women teachers especially in rural areas, construction of residential quarters for women teachers; strengthening science teaching in girls schools and colleges, streamlining the admission policy to promote greater enrolment of women in engineering, electronics, agriculture, veterinary science, fishing and forestry courses, expansion of functional literacy programmes especially in the areas having low female literacy, special non-formal educational programmes for girls in the age group 15-20 years who could not complete formal schooling earlier; construction of more hostels for women belonging to backward classes and "instead of increasing separate women's polytechnics which were developed as multipurpose institutions for importing training in arts, crafts etc, co-educational institutions would be encouraged as far as possible" ⁹

Literacy/Illiteracy

In the sector of literacy there has been only a 6 per cent increase in female literacy during the decade, the figures being 18.70 per cent in 1971 and 24.82 per cent in 1981. In fact, the growth rate had been shrinking over the last two decades, from 102.3 per cent in 1961 to 76.56 per cent in 1971 and 63.75 per cent in 1981, though the sex ratio among literates indicates an improvement during this period from 354 in 1961 to 440 in 1971 and 494 in 1981. The gap in rural-urban female literacy is very high. According to the 1981 census, female literacy in the rural area was 17.96 per cent and in urban 47.82. Kerala has the highest female literacy (65-73 per cent, rural 64.25 per cent) and Rajasthan has the lowest (11.42 per cent, rural 5.46 per cent). The state-wise decadal growth rate of male and female literacy during 1971 and 1981 suggests a higher rate of growth in female literacy compared to men. However, it may be mentioned that this high growth rate is illusory because it is worked out at a low base of female literacy.

The number of illiterates female has been increasing steadily, the figures being 185.2 million in 1961, 215 million in 1971 and 241.6 million in 1981. According to the 1981 census, *nearly 75 per cent of the total female population is illiterate*.¹ Rajasthan being the highest 88.58 per cent followed by Bihar 86.37 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 85.12 per cent, Madhya Pradesh 84.47 per cent, and Jammu & Kashmir 84.12 per cent. The gender gap in access to literacy is also widening. During the decade the sex ratio of illiterates have increased from 1243 in 1971 to 1319 in 1981 in the rural areas and from 1281 to 1344 in

urban areas The study of state-wise sex ratio of illiterates (1971-81 census) indicates that the states of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Tripura have higher proportion of sex ratio of illiterates than the national average

Enrolment

The enrolment figures indicate that the gap between boys and girls continue to exist at a high proportion Over 55 per cent girls at primary level, more than 75 per cent at the middle level and more than 85 per cent at the secondary level are out of schools The corresponding figures for boys are 20 per cent at primary, 57 per cent at middle and 71 per cent at the secondary level

During the decade there had been a shrink in girls' enrolment in the states of Kerala (5.92%), Manipur (4.76%), Nagaland (4.20%) and in Uttar Pradesh (25.47%) at the primary level, West Bengal (0.98%) at the middle level, Haryana (1.34%) Maharashtra (0.69%) at the secondary level

The Mid-term Appraisal of the Sixth Five Year Plan¹⁹ suggests that in the field of education, under the programme for universalisation of elementary education, there has been a special drive for higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools The enrolment of girls increased from 272.78 lakhs in 1979-80 to 282.28 lakhs in 1980-81, 291.19 lakhs in 1981-82, and 301.58 lakhs in 1982-83 in classes I-V The target for 1983-84 was 319.60 lakhs For classes VI-VIII, the enrolment of girls improved from 61.53 lakhs in 1979-80 to 65.68 lakhs in 1980-81, 73.83 lakhs in 1981-82 and 81.20 lakhs in 1982-83 The target for 1983-84 was 87.41 lakhs However, what is more alarming is the fact that the target fixed by the Planning Commission always maintains a big gap between boys and girls enrolment at the elementary level

Higher Education

The proportion of women's enrolment to total enrolment in higher education indicates an improvement during the decade though the gap remains very high At the graduate level, the proportion of women's enrolment to total enrolment increased from 21.70 per cent in 1970-71 to 27.70 per cent in 1981-82, at the post-graduate level from 25.80 per cent to 28.60 per cent at research from 20.70 per cent to 27.70 per cent Subjects in which women's enrolment increased significantly during the decade are commerce (3% to 16%), Science (18% to 28%) and Education (36% to 48%) The table mentioned below indicates the sex ratio (number of women per thousand men) of faculty wise enrolment during the decade

Table IV
Sex Ratio of Faculty wise Enrolment
1971-72 & 1981-82

	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Sci</i>	<i>Com.</i>	<i>Edu.</i>	<i>Eng/Tech</i>	<i>Medi</i>	<i>Agr</i>	<i>Vet. Sci</i>	<i>Law</i>
1971-72	502	250	37	605	11	284	10	9	56
1981-82	619	401	200	934	47	354	36	45	75

SOURCE UGC Annual Report—1981-82

During the decade, activities at research level generated a great deal of work on women. From 1976, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has been sponsoring long-term research programmes in women's studies. The programme was guided by an Advisory Committee. According to the policy statement of the ICSSR, the objective of the programme of women's studies was "to develop new perspectives in the social science through examining basic assumptions, methodological approaches and concepts eg the family, household, women's work, productivity, economic activity etc to remedy the neglect and under assessment of women's contribution to the society"

The institutions of higher education have been slowly realising the significance of study and research on women's issues so as to evolve the means and ways to realise the goal of social justice for women.

In 1974, the SNDT Women's University at Bombay established a research unit on women's studies. By 1981, 41 universities, 8 advanced centers of research and 9 institutions of national importance had undertaken research on women. Such studies included 181 projects and 57 doctoral dissertations.¹² Since 1980, 3 out of 7 Central universities and 10 of the state universities have initiated some activities in research, teaching on women. In 1983, the University Grants Commission requested Vice-Chancellors of all universities to consider ways of integrating women's issues into the teaching and research programmes.

Sex bias in Curriculum

Although various committees and commission¹³ clearly recommended the removal of sexism from the text books, it is a matter of alarm to see that no significant change has taken place. A recent publication¹⁴ exposes the educational planners' and administrators' concern in removing sex biases from the text books. The book is based on 22 English and 20 Hindi language instruction text books prescribed each year by the government for more than 13 lakh students in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. These books included texts prepared or used by two national agencies, the NCERT and Central Board of Secondary Education. The author's research and findings forces one to question the "concern" of educational policy framers.

The following passage from the books are revealing "God has made these women 99 per cent stupid, I mean they have no brains at all. There are certain things in this world that are meant for males and higher education is one such thing. The boys education can not be treated on a level equal to that of the girls. The males are meant to be educated and achievers. But if the females too start doing the same thing, if they also begin to read English newspapers and discuss politics, then what would happen to the domestic chores. What fools these women are? I don't know when these females will get some sense in their heads. Don't you agree that females have limited intelligence? Darwin's, principle of evolution is not applicable to this animal known as the Indian female. There is no early age, middle age or modern age

categorization applicable to her. She had always belonged to the pre-historic period. She continues to be in the pre-historic period. Every female, be she a doctor or sister, is born as a rupees ten thousand penalty."

The biographies in the text books analysed by Kalia shows a poor representation of women. Compared to 47 male biographies, there are only 7 biographies of women of whom 3 are non-Indians. In these biographies women's achievement is noted not for her own worth but because she acts 'like a man'. For example in one of the lessons Sarojini Naidu is described as follows "though a woman she played a part that any man might be proud of". Regarding women's participation in the decision-making process, the text books project values of males dominance and inequality by upholding ideas of husbands' right to give away the wife's property, negative reactions to a female's advice in family matters, sex-stereotyped role of parents in their children's lives, control of female obedience or compliance by command alone, treatment of the wanted and unwanted guests, household budgeting, adoption and marital arrangements. Regarding the issue of joint decision-making, females are portrayed as a "creature of spiteful whim". Women who reject traditional roles and attempt to make decisions are projected as perverse or vulgar.

Such portrayal of women in the text books suggests that the educational system by and large continues to enjoy the blessings of the feudal-minded educational planners and administrators whose attitude towards women has not widened, irrespective of changes and developments in the country. As in the 19th century, women are still looked upon with contempt as senseless creatures to be used at will. The educational structure provides ample ground for the subjugation of women. Ideas of women's inferiority to men is being injected into young minds through school books and young girls are being trained to develop accordingly, defying the constitutional guarantee of sex equality.

- 1 In Macaulay's words the purpose of introducing English education to the Indian subject was to prepare "interpreters between us and millions of whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in opinion, in moral and intellect"
- 2 The Education Commission had recommended that at least 6 per cent of the national income should be earmarked for education but the amount had never increased above 3.5 per cent of the national income.
- 3 Peoples Democracy Issue No. 31, August 1981
- 4 *Towards Equality—Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, Government of India, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, 1974
- 5 *Resume of the Recommendations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India and views of the Empowered Committee Thereon*, Government of India, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, 1976

- 6 *National Plan of Action for Women*. A blueprint of Action Points, Government of India, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, 1977
- 7 *Draft National Policy on Education*, Government of India, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, 1979
- 8 *Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85*, Government of India, Planning Commission
- 9 *Ibid*
- 10 *Mid-term Appraisal of the Sixth Five Year Plan 1983-84*, Government of India, Planning Commission
- 11 ICSSR Programme of Women's Studies A Policy Statement.
- 12 *Report of the First National Conference of Women's Studies*, Bombay, SNDT Women's University, 1981
- 13 The National Committee on Women's Education (1959) The Committee on Differentiation of Curricula between boys and girls (1964), which clearly recommended that "Care should be taken to see that values and attitudes which are essential in the long run are increasingly built up in men and women that no step is taken which will tend to perpetuate or intensify the existing differences", The Education Commission (1964-66)
- 14 Kalia, N N , *Sexism in Indian Education, The lies we tell our Children*, Vikas, New Delhi 1979

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Population Policy

THE DEBATE whether population is the cause of poverty, or is one of its creations is one that has special significance for the developing countries where population growth is influenced by the unequal processes of socio-economic development. The relation between poverty and population growth has been more than established since the first international conference on population (Bucharest 1974). This inter-relationship is now accepted along with the understanding that it is inextricably linked with the issue of women's status. One of the basic principles of the Bucharest Conference was the need for equal participation of women in all aspects of socio-economic development.¹

In India, certain significant trends can be noted while looking into the evolution of the population question. At a time when critical views of India's population growth were limited to members of the colonial administration, the women's organisations were the first to demand the provision of birth control services. In the post independence period, the population question emerged as a critical issue. During the First and Second Five Year Plans, the issues of population growth and family planning were viewed as a long term objective, depending mainly on the "improvement in the living standards and more widespread education, especially among women".² The issue of population growth which tended to overshadow all other demographic issues, resulted in an enormous volume of research on population policies, acceptance and attitudes towards family planning, etc. with a view to reducing the population growth. A major break-through was made when a small group of population experts and planners realised that the critical variable that can explain regional differences in the success or failure of family planning, was the status of women.³ The Committee of the Status of Women in India (1975) observed that an improvement in women's status through education, employment, access to health services and increased age at marriage, directly influenced their fertility.⁴ It, however, warned that any one-to-one co-relationship between education or employment of women and reduced fertility would be simplistic, overlooking the overwhelming influence of the economic factor and the class position of women. Decisions regarding contraception and fertility behaviour arose from a composite set of

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factors which affect the overall status of women within the family and community. The Working Group on National Population Policy (1977-78) recommended that the new strategies that needed to be added to the existing population measures was the improvement in the status of women. This was also stressed by the Working Group on the Employment of Women (1978). The suggestions of these working groups were included in the Draft Sixth Five Year Plan which stated that 'No worthwhile population policy can succeed if it does not focus on changes in the economic conditions and social status of women'⁵. Before the plan could be implemented, the government changed. In the new Plan, the issues of repeated pregnancies and women's lack of education and economic independence were acknowledged as obstacles for women's development and family planning was projected as an essential strategy for women's development.

The population policy envisaged by the Sixth Five Year Plan sought to reduce the reproduction rate to unity by 1996 for the country as a whole and in all the states by the year 2001. This was possible only by reducing the birth rate to 21 per thousand of population from 33 in 1978, and the death rate to 9 from 14.2. The proportion of couples protected by contraception services was to be raised to about 60 per cent. It was also intended to reduce infant mortality from 129 to 60 or less.⁶ An Expert Committee on Population Projections had predicted that the proportion of women in the reproductive age group 15-44 in the total female population would show continuous rise with reduction in female mortality as indicated in the table given below.

Table I
Women in the Reproductive Age Group
(1980-1996) (As on First March)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Female Population</i>	<i>Women in the age group 15-44</i>	<i>% of reproductive age group to total</i>
1980	318.22 (E)	142.38	44.74
1981	321.36 (A)	139.47	43.40
1985	349.05	162.09	46.44
1990	380.20	182.34	47.96
1996	418.33	205.78	49.19

E—Estimate

A—Actual

SOURCE: Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85 Government of India

The implication of this demographic profile is that the birth rate is likely to show rising trends even if the age specific fertility rate remains static. An effective strategy for fertility control was therefore considered necessary if the long-term population goal is to be achieved. The Plan called for a national consensus on the importance of the family planning programme in the context of the growing pressures on the country's economic well being. Social pressures were to be built up against early marriages and large size families. Women's organisations were identified as having an important role to play in this context.

However, the centrality of the connection between the objective of reducing population growth and promoting women's overall status has not made any dent in the thinking of the family planning/health establishment and the incorporation of educational and economic inputs to strengthen women's access to family planning services have never been considered by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Seventh Five Year Plan approach paper has suggested larger allocation of resources to reach the target of 120 million couples in the reproductive age group, greater mobilisation for implementation of programmes, programmes and incentives for target groups social enforcement of late marriage and involvement of non-government organisations.⁷

Aspects of Demographic Transition

According to the estimates of the Expert Committee on Population Projections, the population of the country was estimated at around 659 million on 1st March, 1980, recording a growth rate of 83 per cent over the 1951 census figures. In actuality, population counted by the 1981 Census stands at 685 million. It shows that the steady growth in India's population began from the 20s, and the decadal growth rate has shown a steady progression except for the 40s.

"The year 1921 is considered as the 'great divide' in the demographic history of India. During 1911 to 1921 the population of the country was stable at high mortality and fertility levels—the birth rate of 48 per thousand and death rate of 447 per thousands. The period from 1921 till 1951 (the first Census after independence) was one of slow but steady growth mainly because of gradual reduction in mortality."⁸

Some population experts have pointed out that the great divide of the 20s is characterised by certain significant demographic trends—one of them being that women's economic participation rate began to decline from the same decade.⁹ In fact, the changes in the sex ratio in the population and the sex ratio among workers follow a somewhat similar trend. The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women had inferred from this a close connection between the decline in women's economic opportunities with the increase in the number of women who were victims of poverty and malnutrition, and consequently the higher female death rate.¹⁰

Demographic data indicate¹¹ that during 1921-81, the rise in population was mainly due to dramatic decline in death rates, which fell by more than two thirds during this period. As against this, birth rate in the six decades fell by less than one fourth. The impact of such major demographic changes has however been adverse towards women. Thus while sex ratio in population has changed only marginally (a little over 2 per cent), sex ratio for workers has fallen by almost half. This is more clearly brought out by an almost 60 per cent decline in the work participation rate of women.

The decade under review (1971-81), has registered several shifts in demographic trends that had followed a pattern over several decades.

Table II
Demographic Trends in India 1921-81

Census Year	Total Population	Birth Rate per 1,000 population	Death rate per 1,000 population	Annual average exponential growth rate	Sex ratio population	Decadal variation rate	Sex ratio workers	Decadal variation rate	Work participation of female	Decadal variation on rate
1921	251 3	48 1	47 2	—	955	—	516	—	33 73	—
1931	279 0	46 1	36 2	1 04	950	-0 52	453	-12 21	27 63	-18 08
1941	318 7	45 9	37 2	1 33	945	-0 52	—	—	—	—
1951	361 1	39 9	27 4	1 25	946	+0 10	408	-9 93	23 30	-15 67
1961	439 2	41 7	22 8	1 96	941	-0 53	460	+12 74	27 90	+19 74
1971	548 2	41 2	19 0	2 20	930	-0 96	210	-54 35	12 06	-56 77
1981	685 2	37 2	15 0	2 25	9 33	+0 32	253	+20 48	13 99	+16 00

SOURCE Country statement, International Conference on Population, Mexico August 1984, Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Column 7, 8, 10 and 11 calculated from Census of India, 1981

- a) acceleration in the population growth rate witnessed in 1971 has been arrested
- b) the implied trend in fertility is one of decline
- c) relative improvement in sex ratio in favour of women and in female expectancy of life at birth¹²
- d) relative improvement in economic participation rate of women between 1971-81¹³

Despite some progress made with regard to certain aspects of the population programme, there remains considerable drawbacks, partly due to the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the various factors which influence fertility behaviour. Any programme to achieve a fixed rate of population growth by a certain date *by itself* does not make the national population policy realistic. Here, it may be noted that majority of the population (70/75 per cent) depends for its survival upon the substantial contribution of family work by all members of the household. So long as unpaid family labour remains the mainstay of the great bulk of economic activity, the small family norm will not be effective. Such a norm is more relevant to a wage or salary earning family which could do without unpaid family labour to augment its income. For large sections of the population, with low levels of income, insecure employment, low nutrition, education, social welfare facilities, the imposition of the small family norm raises legitimate fears (specially considering the current levels of mortality). It is difficult for a poor family, to whom an extra child is the only cheap capital asset, to perceive how fewer children can mean anything but a lessening of the family strength in its struggle for existence.

Impact of the Family Planning Programme

The extent to which fertility declines can be attributed to family planning or to socio-economic development, has been the subject of debate among population experts and policy makers. However, an emerging consensus is that both family planning and development contribute to fertility decline and that the two have a synergistic effect. In the developed countries, where contraception is practiced by approximately 70 per cent of all reproductive-age couples, birth rates are low averaging 16 per 1,000. In developing countries, where less than 20 per cent of reproductive age couples use contraceptives, the average birth rate is about 34 per 1,000.¹¹ Among the countries of the world, the legal status of induced abortion ranges from complete prohibition to selective abortion at the request of the pregnant women. A desire to curb population growth has been an explicit reason for the adoption of non-restrictive abortion policies in some countries. Other major reasons have been identified as considerations of public health (to combat illegal abortion with its associated morbidity and mortality), social justice (to give poor women access to abortion), and women's rights.¹⁵

Although India does not permit abortion as a means for fertility regulation, from 1972 onwards medical termination of pregnancy (under the MTP Act) has been allowed as part of health care facility for pregnant mothers, in

cases of contraceptive failure and if the pregnancy is alleged by the woman to have been caused by rape ¹⁶ Primarily this facility is permitted to save from health hazards the millions of women who take recourse to clandestine abortions by ill-qualified doctors or quacks in unhygienic conditions. Lack of medical personnel and facilities, conservative attitudes among family members, physicians and hospital administrators are factors that effectively curtail women's access to abortion, specially of economically and socially deprived women. In 1970, there were an estimated 6.4 million illegal abortions in the country, corresponding to an abortion ratio of about 20 per 100 known pregnancies and a general abortion rate in the vicinity of 55 per 1,000 ¹⁷ In 1978-79, almost 47 per cent of all reported abortions were performed due to contraceptive failure among married women. By 1981, about 3,000 facilities for the performance of MTP had received official approval and 6,200 physicians had been trained. However, only one-tenth of the 5,200 Primary Health Centres in the country were equipped to provide MTP upto the tenth week of gestation and only, 1,600 physicians working in the centres were trained to perform suction cuttage ¹⁸ According to a doctor, even after ten years, not much has been done to make MTP safe. In rural areas, less than 11 per cent of deliveries receive any trained attendance. In 1980-81 there were roughly 4 million abortions while the official estimate has been 3.8 lakhs. Moreover, for nearly 200 abortions for every 1,000 known pregnancies, the official figure is 12 abortions per 1,000 pregnancies ¹⁹

In recent years, another major (but unlisted) reason for abortion has been the detection of a female foetus. Amnioscentesis, a scientific technique that is supposed to be used mainly to detect genetic and sex specific deformities has of late become very popular in India for detection of the sex of a foetus. The amnioscentesis tests were earlier conducted in the government hospitals on an experimental basis. Now these tests are conducted for sex determination leading to extermination of female foetus through abortions in private clinics and hospitals in many cities.

The test is not totally reliable as it gives 95-97 per cent accurate results and may lead to spontaneous abortions or premature delivery, dislocation of the hips and respiratory complications. Yet, between 1978 and 1983, around 78,000 female foetuses are estimated to have been aborted after sex determination tests in India. At the Delhi All India Institute of Medical Sciences (where the test was started in 1974 to detect genetically malformed foetuses,) 1,000 cases were done before the doctors realised that only female foetuses were being aborted. The issue was taken up in Parliament following questions raised by women's organisation and subsequently the test was discontinued at AIIMS except in cases with a family history of congenital malformation or for women over 40 years who ran the risk of having a malformed baby. However, even today AIIMS continues to receive requests to conduct the test even when it is not required medically ²¹

A striking development in recent years has been the rise in voluntary sterilisation which has become a major method of fertility control in many countries. In the 1960s, small monetary incentives were introduced for sterilisation acceptors and motivators. The Forth Five Year Plan placed high

reliance on it to achieve the birth target of 32 per thousand. However, as the Status of Women Committee Report stated, this over-dependence on the terminal method was a wrong strategy as it raised too many fears in women's minds, often caused ill health from lack of medical attention after operation²²

It is significant to note that the percentage of tubectomy to total sterilizations has shown an extremely interesting trend over the years. Up to 1959, they made up the major share of sterilisations. During the period 1960 to 1975-76 except for a variation between 1972-73 and 1974-75, the percentage of tubectomies constituted less than 35 per cent of the total sterilisations. In 1977-78, this proportion jumped to 80.2 per cent even though the number of sterilisations declined sharply during that year (8.26 million to 0.94 million). Of the 0.94 million sterilisations during that year, as high as 0.76 million were tubectomies.

Here, it must be stressed that women's adoption of contraceptive measures depends on the latter's accessibility and the husband's attitude towards the final family size yet, 'women only' measures account for approximately 75 per cent of total modern contraception in the country. Tubectomies outnumber vasectomies by four to one. This reflects the significant influence on women's fertility of factors external to the programme.

In 1976, the New National Population Policy placed renewed emphasis on the use of incentives and disincentives to achieve the target of 4.3 million sterilizations for the year 1976-77 (the figure for that year was 8.6 million). State governments were given directives for a massive campaign for sterilization and the option to use the incentive/disincentive scheme. The scheme caused widespread panic in the country as officials (from zilla parishad officials, school teachers to government family planning officials) under pressure to 'fill their quotas' took recourse to forced and indiscriminate sterilizations. The targets were achieved under force and at the cost of human dignity and many deaths were reported due to the operations being performed in unhygienic conditions. Popular reaction to such coercion proved an important factor for the absolute defeat suffered by the Congress(I) government in the 1977 parliamentary elections.

Although the political debacle of 1977 put an end to the blatant use of state power to force the pace of sterilization, the central government's policy in this sphere continues to suffer from contradictions and an inability to implement the measures that it identifies in Plan documents. The sixth Five Year Plan called for a popular movement for a small family. Social analysts who support the call for population control, stress the need for an ideology to popularise this movement²³. According to us, the only ideology that can support such a movement lies in women's demand for their right to safe contraception and voluntary maternity. For women to be able to assert this right, it is necessary to improve their overall status in the family and community, bring the service within their reach, reduce infant mortality and improve the health and nutritional status of families, especially children and mothers. This, however, calls for elimination of poverty and unemployment, to

improve their access to development resources and strengthen their decision-making status within the family and community. Schemes of disincentives run counter to the constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights and the national policies on children's and women's rights. They also ignore the political lessons of 1977 and the social analysis that clearly states that reproductive decisions are often not taken by individuals or couples but are heavily influenced by group pressures²⁵

Data for this paper collected a Centre For Women's Development Project on Women's Dedace

- 1 *World population Plan of Action*, UN World Population Conference, Bucharest, 1974
- 2 Ashok Mitra *Population in India's Development* edited by Ashish Bose, Ashok Mitra, PB Desai, JN Sharma, pp 4-7, Vikas, 1974
See also Vina Mazumdar *Fertility Policy in India* in Blumen Lipman, Bernard J (ed) *Sex Roles and Social Policy*, Sage Publications, London, 1979
- 3 *Report of the Working Group on National Population Policy, 1977-78*, Government of India, New Delhi 1979
- 4 *Towards Equality Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* or CSWI, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, GOI, 1975 chp, VIII, pp 322
- 5 *Draft Sixth Five Year Plan*, pp 49-50
- 6 *Sixth Five Year Plan*, Government of India Planning Commission, 1980, pp 20-21
- 7 *The Approach to the Seventh Five Year Plan*, GOI Planning Commission, 1984
- 8 *Country Statement*, International Conference on Population, Mexico, August 1984, GOI, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare p 4
- 9 Ashok Mitra, *op cit*, Vol I pp 438
- 10 *Towards Equality op cit*, Chp II
- 11 See Table on Demographic Trends in India (1921-81) attached
- 12 *Country Statement, op cit*, p 4.
- 13 There is a continuing debate regarding the comparability of data on women's economic participation calculated by various Census owing to changes in definition of workers. A strong view is that definitional differences should not be over-emphasised in order to understate the gravity of the declining trend in women's economic participation, as stated by Prof. Ashok Mitra in *Status of Women: Shifts in Occupational Patterns, 1961-71* Introduction, Abhinav Publishers, Delhi, 1979
- 14 *Family Planning in the 1980s: Challenges and Opportunities* Reports of the International Conference on Family Planning in the 80s, Djakarta 1981, UNFPA, and the Population Council New York
- 15 Christopher Tietze, *Induced Abortion, A World Review* A Population Council Fact Book, V Edition, 0 8
- 16 *Ibid*, *op cit*, pp 14 17 *Ibid*, pp 25 18 *Ibid*.
- 19 Dr Imrana Qadeer, during a meeting held in Delhi on 15 July, 1982, to protest against the sex determination tests
- 20 Vibhuti Patel, *Amniocentesis ad Female Foetocide: Misuse of Medical Technology*, Socialist Health Review, Vol I, No 2, Sept '84
- 21 Imrana Qadeer, *op cit*
- 22 *Towards Equality, op cit*, pp 326
- 23 Malcolm Adesiah, At a discussion organised by the Family Planning Foundation, Delhi January, 1985

*Exploitation of Women Labour :
An Analysis of Women's Employment in Kerala*

THE CAPITALIST development in industry is usually equated to progress from domestic production units to large scale manufactories, through a process of mechanisation. But the evolution of the capitalist production organisation need not be unilinear. The stage of development of class consciousness among labour and the specificities of class struggle are important factors to be taken into account. The decentralisation (or informalisation)¹ of production is seen as the first strategy of capital to bypass the social limits imposed by the organised working class to the capitalist exploitation. Gender-based exploitation (both economic and extra-economic) has been the second one. This paper is an attempt to examine the changing strategies of exploitation inherent in the employment of women's labour in the industrial sector of Kerala state and to analyse the socio-political forces operating behind them.

The present paper can be broadly divided into three sections. The first section attempts to examine certain broad theoretical aspects of women's employment. The second one deals with certain emerging trends in the structure of employment in Kerala and in the country. The third section deals with the modus operandi of gender-based exploitation of labour under changing environment and institutional framework.

The relationship between the so-called informal structure and capital and the role of gender in employment in the informal sector have been two important areas of theoretical debate recently. The dual economy theories, the earliest in the array of theories, failed to capture the specifics of the formal-informal sector linkages. The structural linkages between the formal and informal sectors and the functional linkage of the latter with the former, and the consequent highly competitive and exploitative conditions, compels and/or enables capitalists to cheapen certain aspects of production, and workers to accept a lower wage packet.² The extraction of surplus by the capitalists involves, lengthening the working day, worsening conditions of work etc., but the demographic response to such conditions (high fertility rates because the larger the family the more helping hands to support the family) ensures the continual growth of the surplus labour pool and of the informal sector.

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The relationship between the wages that capitalist enterprises may offer to differing categories of workers and the existence of a widespread sector of economic activity not directly organised by capital cannot be understood solely in simple economic terms. There are important political and social dimensions to the problem. The ability of capital to dictate the optimal conditions for its own survival and the differences in variation in resistance to proletarianisation by labour are important aspects which influence the specifics of the labour situation. Therefore, the inconsistencies, contradictions and competing forces within the social and economic system influence the specifics of the situation.

According to Moser and Young, there are two major factors within the structure of capitalist organisation of production and the relations of production, which enables women's work to be unpaid and invisibilised, or poorly paid and marginalised.³ They are 1) the privatisation of women's work, and the constitution of women as subsidiary or secondary workers. Historically, increasing stratification by gender has accompanied the development of industrial capitalism and the loss of the family's role as a primary unit of social production, through the separation of the three functions of production, consumption and distribution. Women's labour became age-specific and sector-specific and, moreover, became increasingly privatised and directed to the transformation of the wage into use values for consumption within the home, their main task being to stretch the man's wage so that it would cover the main needs of the family.⁴ Thus women have never been fully proletarianised.

The movement of women in and out of the labour force is a complex process which requires the identification and analysis of two sets of relations: the relations of production and the relations of gender, at specific historical conjunctures, and their implications in terms of the categories and types of activities in which women are engaged. The view of women as somehow outside the labour force, outside the mainstream of economic life, and the designation of certain sectors of the economy as women's work, bears the imprint of an ideology. Heyzer points out that women tend to be segregated into particular occupations which are carefully delimited by an ideology, linking their activity to their gender, with the vast majority, therefore working in occupations defined as having some structural resemblance to their family role, or which over time has become, stigmatised simply because women work in them.⁵

Kerala is an industrially backward state. According to the 1971 Census, the industrial sector provided employment only to 15.73 per cent of the labour force. The State has the sixth position in the country in terms of the size of the household manufacturing sector of industry, measured in terms of employment. Total employment in the manufacturing sector as in 1974-75 was 1279887, of which 98.75 per cent was contributed by the household sector.⁶ The traditional industries employ 82.33 per cent of the total labour force in the industrial sector, of which 62.83 per cent are women.⁷ Most of these industries partakes the characteristics of lower forms of capitalist production,

i.e., they employ essentially labour-intensive technologies despite the fact that they are engaged in capitalist production and employ wage labour

Based on the labour absorption characteristics, these various traditional industries can be said to be ranging between formal and real subordination of labour to capital. Formal subordination of labour to capital is associated with that stage of capitalist production in which the objective of the capitalist is to maximise absolute surplus value using traditional technology⁸

Though most traditional industries in Kerala are characteristic of a process of formal subordination of labour, some industries such as coir and cashew are closer to large scale industries in which real subordination of capital exists. Under real subordination of capital, the whole of organisation of production is carried forward to higher stages, involving introduction of machinery, introducing greater division of labour and close control of workers and work processes, leading to the emergence of large scale production, increased productivity and consequent realization of relative surplus value. However, since these industries do not employ modern technology, they can be called "factories" only in the sense of workshops in which numbers of persons work under strict supervision

An examination of the effects of different types of production organisations on the gender-based division of labour is important as it gives insights into the effects of such employment on women's social autonomy⁹. There are two important aspects relating to this. Firstly, the discussion on the effect of employment on women's emancipation, and secondly, the way in which industrial production in the Third World country like India is being integrated into the world capitalist system

The first aspect centres around the way 'class' and 'gender' structure women's employment in industrial production, and the opportunities and limitations this poses regarding the goal of women's emancipation. The process of international capital accumulation and the integration of industrial population of developing countries with the World system have important implications on women's employment. This leads to increasing marginalization as it happened in the case of coir workers in Kerala due to mechanization. At the same time, as rightly pointed out by some authors, there has been specific recruitment of a group of young unmarried women in the new export-oriented manufacturing industries located in developing countries¹⁰. This has been most rampant in industries such as electronics and garment making which are mostly operating in Export Processing Zones. Their exploitative nature has been recognised by even the U N agencies¹¹

Employers have used the criterion of gender in order to discriminate against the integration of women in wage employment on the basis of equality. This phenomenon has been explained by writers in two ways. The first explanation is that capitalists use both gender and socio-economic factors as tools of exploitation and that such exploitation increases as developing countries are integrated with the world production system. The second argument is that male dominance permeates all societal structures¹²

Baud rightly points out that "productive work" offers women some means of emancipation.¹³ However, whether and to what degree such emancipation occurs depends to a large extent on the way in which production is organised. According to Baud, a relatively small part of industrial production and employment is geared towards the world market, and is experiencing growth with a concomitant increase in wage levels, whereas a much larger portion of industrial production and employment is only indirectly linked to the global production and trade system, and experiences much lower profits and wage levels. It is this that leads to unequal distribution of employment and wage levels between two parts of the economy.¹⁴

Baud's analysis has certain limitations. One of the limitations relate to the identification of the formal sector with the export oriented sector. According to her, it is international capital accumulation which has led to the creation of a formal sector in developing countries. Entrepreneurs in the formal sector make use of the decentralised sector to cut down their own operating costs in machines and labour. This would imply a steady expansion of the informal sector rather than their gradual disappearance. Export-led growth, however, has not been the major aspect of growth of formal sector in India, although the strategy of export promotion has contributed to industrial growth as a whole. Moreover, contrary to Baud's argument, most export oriented industries in Kerala have been of the medium and small categories and which can be included in the informal sector both in terms of scale of operation and mode of production.

This finding disproves Baud's argument that labour in the formal sector is an "aristocracy" which is well-paid and protected by labour legislation. What determines wage rates is not the size of the industry as such, but more importantly, it is the dominant mode of production. Even the formal sector employs large number of workers on contract basis, and therefore, involves informal elements within it. If an industry in the formal sector is dominated by trading capital (and consequently engaged in 'sterile' activities), wage rates in its informal segment (that of contract labour) is likely to remain at the level of that of the informal sector establishments.¹⁵ It has to be noted that wage rates in the precapitalist segment as a whole is partly determined by the psychological attitudes of workers towards employment and wages.¹⁶ Where the formal sector is a small island, wages of the regularised workers in this sector, on the other hand, are influenced more by rates prevailing in the informal sector as a whole than by the formal sector in general. This is because effective trade unionism which helps to put up wage rates, is constrained both because of smaller number of regularised workers and the way in which temporary (contract) workers are used as a weapon against the former. Because of these reasons, wage levels between the formal and informal sectors does not show substantial variations, especially in situations where trading capital is dominant.

We have seen above a paradoxical situation where wage rates remain relatively constant in both the purely export-oriented sector and that sector which is only indirectly linked with the global market, though profit rates are

different Baud fails to explain such a situation because her only criterion is integration of industries with the global market. The divergent means of integration have been overlooked by her. The means and degree by which women's labour is exploited assures high profits and low labour costs to the capitalist, though these may vary according to the type of the capitalists. Our focus in this paper is to examine the ways in which women's labour is recruited for profit maximisation by the capitalists.

Production Organisation and the Gender-based Division of Labour · Emerging Trends

Women labour force in India form a small proportion of the country's total female population. According to 1981 census figures, only one-fifth of the total women are in the labour force, the remaining are not engaged in economically productive activities.

In addition to the small proportion of working women, **marginality is an important emerging phenomenon**. Two-thirds of the women labour force are **engaged in full-time work**, while the other one-third are classified as **marginal workers**. Marginal workers are those who have been economically active partially, but not throughout the year. Marginality is mainly a female phenomenon. While in the case of women the share of marginally occupied is one third in the case of men it is only one out of twenty five.

Census data shows two important observations relating to work participation rates

- 1) Women's work participation rate in the country as a whole has been significantly lower than that of men, and 2) the relative gap between men and women in this regard has been increasing in such a way that women's work participation rate has been markedly declining.

Labour participation of women in Kerala also falls in line with the national trend, it has been declining practically all through the present century. In 1981, fewer women (17 per cent) were found to be economically active in Kerala than in the whole of India (21 per cent). Leela Gulati points out that this phenomenon has to be viewed in the light of the faster growth rate of population in Kerala upto 1970.¹⁷ This must be the reason why work participation rate has declined for both men and women in the State. Moreover, increasing literacy in the state, alternatively means that both males and females spend longer time in schools than in the rest of the country.

The occupation-wise distribution of working women in Kerala shows two important findings:

- 1) One out of every 20 working women in the state is classified as a cultivator, while at the all-India level, it is only one-third, and 2) In Kerala, more than four out of every 10 working women are engaged in non-agricultural activities and household industry, while in the country as a whole, only one-sixth of the working women are so occupied.

The employment of a large proportion of women in the non-agricultural sector can be attributed to two factors:

1) the commercialisation of agriculture which has been rapidly taking place in the State. For instance, a substantial fall in paddy cultivation over the years has considerably reduced women's employment,

2) because of social barriers, women belonging to high caste poor peasant families do not generally seek employment in the agricultural sector. An emerging informal sector could easily use this cheap labour for productive employment.

An analysis of data on workers according to sex and sector shows that there is no major difference between Kerala and the rest of the country in the proportion of working men in the organised sector. However, the proportion of working women employed in the organised sector is almost twice as high at the national level. Though the proportion of working women in the unorganised sector including cultivation is lower in Kerala, this is not true of employment if cultivation is excluded. Thus, it can be said that employment of women is more concentrated in the unorganised sector of Kerala economy compared to that at the all-India level.

Mitra et al study¹⁸ shows that while 8.4 per cent of the working men were engaged in modern occupations, the corresponding figure for women was only 3.9 per cent. According to the 27th Round of NSS, while 14.2 per cent of the working men were "working in enterprises/professions as regular salaried employees or wage labourer", the corresponding percentage for working women was only 4.3¹⁹

Distribution of Women Workers in Certain Industries
According to Land-size and Assets in Family Account

Industry	Land per household (in acres)	Total Assets per Household (in Rs.)
Coir	0.11	3053.54
Cashew	0.16	2407.88
Food Processing	0.07	22590.00
Electronics	0.35	29954.61
State average*	0.17	

SOURCE 1) *Women Workers in Food Processing Industry in Kerala* (ICSSR Project, 1981), 2) *Women Workers in the Unorganised Sector of Coir Industry in Kerala* (ICSSR Project, 1978), 3) *Women Workers in Cashew Industry in Kerala* (ICSSR Project, 1979) and 4) *An Evaluative Study of Women's Organisation in Kerala* (ICSSR Project, 1984)

NOTE - * means total land area divided by total number of households

Some of the micro studies on women in the informal sector show that a process of migration from rural to the urban and semi-urban areas has been taking place. This has been attributed not to the pull of opportunities in the urban areas, but pauperisation caused by the disappearance of their traditional avenues of employment.²⁰ Though migration from rural to the urban areas is not so acute as in the case of other states (geographically,

Kerala has been described as a "rural-urban continuum"), it has been taking place from traditional occupations to modern ones. Traditionally industries such as peeling of cashew, coir spinning and fish processing were considered to be "*inferior*" occupations in which women of forward castes were rarely engaged in. However, the emerging trend has been the flow of more and more women belonging to higher castes into these occupations.

Since forward communities such as Christians and Nairs were traditionally landowners, the coming of more of them for employment in these industries, alternatively implies a process of alienation from land and consequent pauperisation. This has been indicated by the data on landownership. The family status in terms of both land and total assets held by households of workers show a dismally poor picture (see Table above).

An analysis of the Census data on occupational pattern leads to the following conclusions:

- 1) Women's employment in all sectors, except agriculture shows a lower compound rate of growth than that in the case of total employment. This indicates the gender-based growth of employment in Kerala economy.
- 2) The pressure of unemployment among women has been mounting in rural than in urban areas. This has been indicated by the higher compound rate of growth of non-workers in rural areas.
- 3) The role of household industry and agricultural labour which had traditionally been absorbers of a sizeable segment of women labour has been declining in urban areas, in rural areas, it shows only an insignificant growth rate.
- 4) Employment in "other industries and service sectors" showed the maximum compound growth rate. However, the growth rate in the rural sector was higher than that of the urban sector. This indicates that whatever industrialisation that has taken place has been in the rural areas and part of the labour from other sectors and from the group of non-workers move to these industries.
- 5) Women's employment in the non-household industrial sector grew at a higher rate than total employment both in Kerala and at national level during 1971-81 period. While the annual compound rate of growth in total employment in Kerala and at national level were 1.16 and 0.001 per cent respectively, in the case of women's employment, the respective growth rates were 1.88 and 1.21, respectively.

The trend in migration of women further explains the occupational pattern. In the case of female population, Kerala presents an unusual situation of both a relatively high rural push (migration from rural to urban areas) and reverse migration (migration from an urban area to rural areas). Moreover, unlike in the case of other states, both these variables showed positive rate of growth during 1961-71 period, from 10 per cent to 11 per cent in the case of rural push and 6 per cent to 8 per cent in the case of reverse push.²¹

Quantitative evidence on employment trends and migration indicates that, declining employment opportunities for women in the sectors in which they had been traditionally engaged in, is an emerging phenomenon and this has not been adequately compensated by employment in other sectors. The expanding buyer's market for unskilled labour together with Kerala's peculiar situation of rural-urban continuum, attracts a class of investors (who are predominantly trading capitalists) to invest in rural areas. Though the rate of growth of industrial investment in the private sector is not significant, an expanding supply of unemployed and underemployed women labour in the villages assures them high returns.

The setting up of modern industries in the rural areas further widens the extent of competition in the labour market. While earlier, in some of the traditional industries, particularisms based on caste and social status prevented easy flow of labour from high castes, the introduction of apparently "modern" industries cuts these barriers and makes it possible. Thus, the extent of competition in the labour market is widened leading to declining real wages and deplorable working and living conditions of workers.

The strategies of gender-based exploitation in Kerala industry, in the present study, have been analysed with respect to its two broad aspects

- 1) employment in traditional industries, and
- 2) employment programmes through women's organisations (which includes both voluntary organisations of women and charitable institutions)

Women in Traditional Industries

Agriculture was the major sector in which Kerala women were engaged in the past. The emergence of traditional industries such as coir in 1860s and cashew in the beginning of the present century, opened up employment opportunities to women in the industrial sector.¹ In most traditional industries of Kerala, women have a dominant position in the workforce.²² Workers in some of these industries were recruited from the lowest rungs of the social and economic stratum, harijans in the case of cashew industry and Ezhavas in coir industry. Exclusive dependence on agricultural sector for work meant for them low and uncertain income, arbitrary terms and conditions of work and long spells of forced idleness. The establishment of cashew and coir "factories" opened up for these agricultural workers some chances of regular wage payment. The overriding desire to overcome social barriers and achieve freedom of labour was another strong incentive to seek work in these factories. More specifically, work in these "factories" meant the prospect of money wages, fixed hours of work—though it also meant longer working hours—and, more importantly, continuity in employment.

Other traditional industries such as handloom, beedi and fish processing are of later origin compared to cashew and coir. In these industries women of forward communities also have been increasingly employed. As society in general looked down upon work in cashew and coir factories, it has

not been so in the case of other industries. Workers in the latter group of industries, belonging to forward communities, while attaching a superior 'status' to work in such factories, look down upon trade unionism as something foreign to them. The capitalists can exploit these favourable factors to their advantage.

The system of recruitment of labour also is similar in most traditional industries. Along with women, large numbers of children are recruited for work in cashew and coir factories. While recruitment of plantation labour, has been done under *Kankani* system,²³ the *institution of Moopan*²⁴ performed the same function in both coir and cashew industries. Moopan (senior worker) was usually a senior man and recruitment and control of women workers was his responsibility. The institution of *Moopan* was a direct control mechanism in the hands of the capitalists in two ways. Firstly, it reduced organisational cost and effort, and secondly, as labour became indirectly recruited, the capitalists became in no way answerable to the former. Until the end of 1960s, the *Moopan/Kankani* system prevailed in a slightly different form in fish processing industry also. Peeling of fish which is the major activity in which women are employed was predominantly done by the large and medium scale exporting firms. These firms used to process the prawn procured by them in peeling sheds attached to their freezing plants. A male worker assumed the role of accountant-cum-supervisor. Piece-rate system of wage payment prevailed. The male worker's function was to distribute fish for peeling among workers and to keep accounts relating to their wages.

The piece-rate system was one of the most effective forms of work supervision, quality control and extension of working hours. In cashew industry, since wages were not paid for broken kernels, workers had to be extremely careful in shelling and peeling nuts.²⁵ In fish processing industry, a flat rate of peeling wastage was fixed and if the wastage exceeded this ceiling, a cut in the wages was made. Actually, the wastage varied according to the size and variety of shrimps peeled. In coir industry also, the piece-rate system prevailed. Rates varied from manufactory to manufactory and from product to product.²⁶ The workers were meted with severe punishment in cases such as eating of kernels or taking of prawns for their own use in the case of cashew and fish processing industries respectively. Sexual exploitation of workers by supervisors was rampant in all three industries.

Informalisation

A second phase in the growth of women's employment in Kerala has been the process of informalisation and decentralisation which took place in most traditional industries. By informalisation, we mean the shift of processing (production) from factory level to cottage-level. The process of informalisation offers a number of advantages to the capitalists. The most important objective of informalisation, for them, was to check the growth of a radical working class movement which originated in industries such as cashew and coir in the early part of the present century. Moreover this enabled the capitalists to escape labour laws besides minimising costs and

time of supervision of work.

The process of informalisation took different forms in different industries and its strategies also varied from industry to industry and from time to time

The earliest form of informalisation was a change in the *gender-structure* of employment. For instance, in the early days of the cashew industry, nearly 15-20 per cent of the workers were males. Gradually in most activities men were dispensed with. Subsequently, the percentage of women workers in the industry stabilised around 94.²⁷ In the coir manufacturing industry, on the other hand, the percentage share of female labour declined. While in 1938-39, the percentage share of female labour was 11.1²⁸ in the industry, it declined to 5 per cent as at present. This change can be attributed to two reasons. The gradual process of mechanisation that took place in the industry, while reducing total employment, also resulted in a fall in the percentage share of women workers as the nature of work also changed. Another reason was the unionisation of women labour and the consequent general increase in the basic wages by 25 per cent. Moreover, the rate of maternity benefits also was raised as a result of collective bargaining.²⁹

At the same time, the percentage share of women workers in the coir processing sector increased. Beedi industry underwent a change in the gender-structure of workers. During the early days of the organised sector in this industry, male workers were employed in factories. Subsequently, more and more male workers were substituted by female labour. The handloom industry also showed a similar trend.

A later form of informalisation was *cottage-level processing*. This happened in different industries in different names and at different periods. Cottage-level processing in cashew industry started with the increased demand for cashew kernels in the export market in the second half of 1920s. European trading companies who were engaged in exporting cashew kernels on a small scale prior to 1925, took to purchase of raw nuts and their distribution to workers' households for partial processing like roasting and shelling. Further processing such as peeling, grading and packing alone was confined to the factories, which were no more than drying and packing yards. In fish processing industry, informalisation through cottage-level processing has been almost complete. The informalised system of processing in this industry involve two forms: 1) subcontracting, and 2) parent-ancillary relationship. In the former form, the exporting companies procure fish and distribute it among the workers through contractors, while in the latter form, fish is procured by the small firms in the informal sector themselves, process it and sell to the exporting company. This led to the mushrooming of the peeling sheds around the fishing centres, especially Quilon and Alleppey and the port city of Cochin. While the wages of workers increased slightly over time, this was nullified by revisions in targets which were arbitrarily made by the employers. In a buyer's market for women labour, this led to extremely appalling conditions of work with low wages combined with extra-economic forms of exploitation. In beedi industry, the inherent exploitation of female

for male labour was further accentuated by cottage level production. Large beedi companies, concentrated mainly in Trichur and Cannanore districts, distribute the materials among women for rolling of beedis at piece-rates. A survey by the author among beedi workers who have contracts with a leading beedi manufacturing company in Trichur district showed that the cottage level manufacturing has become wide-spread in this industry for the last five years. The money wage rates of these workers registered only a nominal increment of 3 per cent over the last 5 years. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of workers were found to be prone to health hazards. The stagnant wage levels in this industry should be viewed in the light of the fact that majority of the workers are women and children.

Another variant of the process of informalisation has been *shifting of industries* across geographical regions according to variation in both wage rates and the level of growth of trade unionism. While the former criterion offers an absolute present advantage to the capitalist class in terms of a lower wage bill, the latter one arrests any possible hike in the wage bill in future. Kannan's study shows that the mandays lost per cashew worker in Kerala due to such transplantation of factories in 1975, 1977 and 1978 were 120, 93 and 65 respectively. The transplantation took place mainly to Tamil Nadu where the wage level is lower. While the weighted average of wages in the cottage sector in Quilon (Kerala) expressed as a percentage of that of the factory sector in the State was 54 per cent, that of the factory sector in the adjoining Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu) was only 38 per cent. On the other hand, the weighted average wages in Kanyakumari, expressed as a percentage of that of Quilon was only 71 per cent.³⁰ Moreover, the wage rates of women workers in Tamil Nadu was only 43.52 per cent of that of their counterparts in Kerala, though the piece-rates in the latter state did not enable them to earn a subsistence living.³¹ In the case of other industries such as coir and beedi also, a process of transplantation took place. While in the case of the former industry, lower wages in Tamil Nadu was the major reason for transplantation into that State, in the case of beedi, both lower wages, weak trade unionism and contiguity with raw material sources were the reasons.

The handloom industry which was concentrated mainly in Cannanore district, which had once been described as the "Manchester of Kerala" witnessed a combination of the processes of informalisation and transplantation. The factory sector, which was once dominant in the industry, began to subcontract to small producers since 1971-72. This provided substantial employment to women. However, since wage rates were substantially lower in Tamil Nadu, the emerging trend has been transplantation of units to that state leading to declining employment levels within Kerala.

Shifting of industries generally leads to a fall in the employment opportunities of women in general, as once the industry is shifted, exploitation based on gender becomes a secondary criterion to the capitalist.

A major variant of the shifting industries has been *mechanisation*. This happened mainly in coir industry. Moreover, the industry has been continuously arguing for mechanisation on grounds of competitiveness in the

export market though this has been strongly opposed by trade unions. As mechanisation within the state becomes difficult, the capitalists think of more and more transplantation of industrial units to other states and of mechanisation there.

Women's Work and Women's Organisations

Until recently, the ruling class did not consider "improving" women's position through productive employment as a very important goal. Even the Community Development Programme (CDP), intended as a multi-dimensional instrument for both social and economic development of the rural population, originally overlooked women,³² and included them later only as recipients of family welfare services. The subsequent incorporation of such women welfare schemes was in response to the demands from pro-upper class women's leaders and their organisations such as AIWC. It was in tune with this demand that women's societies (Mahila Samajams) were formed in rural areas.

Mahila Samajams were essentially an indispensable part of the CDP and hence their promotion by Government had an inherent political rationale of serving the interests of the ruling classes. It should be noted that the freedom movement had also generated a radical women's movement which raised certain issues relating to the basic rights of women, including women's right to work.³³ Promotion of Mahila Samajams by the Government itself aroused an illusion among the deprived sections of women that the ruling classes would solve their pressing problems.

Women's societies, with all these weaknesses, could arouse the morale of rural women. This together with the support given by the Government, led to the setting up of a number of societies in different parts of the State, 75.28 per cent of the societies were started during the period 1950-70.³⁴ The societies were engaged in a number of activities and 46 per cent of the organisations were engaged in three or more activities.

Only 20.83 per cent of the organisations were engaged in any productive activities, while the others were confined to women and child welfare activities. The focus on welfarism gradually turned into employment training for women. Thus craft centres for provision of skills were started in many societies. Crafts such as tailoring and garment making were started. As many as women were so trained (often with much duplication) their productive employment became a grave problem. The trading capitalists who were involved in contract supplies of inputs to the societies through the government channel, found the societies as a potential source of cheap products for their trade. Their influence was manifested through the starting of production centres in some societies, though such production activities had no significant impact on the women's societies as a whole.

Gradually, the leadership of the societies became the trustees of public money, which began to be flown into these organisations in the name of women's welfare. Moreover, this group of few began to use leadership as title

of social status and power. The ordinary members who got disillusioned with the working of these societies, either left them or became passive. While the societies became half-dead organisations, the trading capitalists continued to use them as a source of cheap products.

Entry of Industrial Bourgeoisie

By the end of 1960s itself, the pro-ruling class women's organisations had started propagating the idea of "employment through women's organisations", as a patchwork measure to stop the disillusionment of rural women. Women's cooperatives were projected as the best agencies providing employment to rural women and some cooperatives were started in different parts of the State. These cooperatives, falling under the administrative control of the Khadi and Village Industries Board, were mainly engaged in activities such as hand pounding of paddy, bee-keeping and such other cottage industries. Although these cooperatives were a cheap source of labour for the trading capitalists, more than 90 per cent of such organisations (altogether 71 organisations) became defunct by the year 1971.³⁵

The reasons for the virtual failure of this early attempt were many. Cooperatives which were engaged in hand-pounding of rice were concentrated in Palghat, Trichur, Ernakulam, Alleppey and Trivandrum districts, which together accounted for 67 per cent of the total area under paddy. Mechanisation of rice milling resulted in heavy competition and in the death of many units in the traditional sector. Cottage industries such as those engaged in basket-making failed mainly because of reasons of inadequate availability of forest-based raw materials and working capital problems.

The industrial bourgeoisie found the debates that followed the Report of the National Committee on the Status of Women, which coincided with the celebration of the International Woman's Year, as a suitable climate for making use of the women's organisations as recruiting agencies of cheap labour. The best ramification of such a strategy by industrial capitalists can be found in the Sixth Five Year Plan document. Improving the status of women had been stated as an explicit goal of the Plan. One of the most important methods by which the Plan proposed to do so, was the creation of income-generating activities for women, through Mahila Mandals and other organisations. The programmes formulated for women's employment included, extending training and education programme for women, promoting female employment in *women-preferred industries*, promoting self-employment and including women in 'manpower budgeting'.³⁶

The idea of employment through women's organisations was further accentuated and materialised in the setting up of industrial co-operatives. The cooperatives were essentially meant as ancillaries to the large scale industries.³⁷ In this role, the political economy of ancillarisation was clear. It has been argued that the parent-ancillary relationship need not always be competitive, instead, small and large units can support each other through mutual buying and selling and also through a process of sub-contracting.³⁸ Therefore promotion of ancillary units is rationalised in terms of their

employment potential and the mutual advantages they can get for both the sectors. Though we do not have any national studies or all-Kerala studies in order to make a cost-benefit calculus of inter-industry linkages, a number of regional studies have shown the directional imbalances in the flow of large scale to small scale units.³⁹ The flow of products from the large scale sector to the small scale sector is larger as compared to the flow in the opposite direction. Studies by the Subramaniam have shown that ancillarisation has not made any significant contribution on the employment front as technology in most large scale industries, which are imported, are labour-displacing rather than labour-absorbing.⁴⁰

For the industrial and trading capitalists in the country, the slogan of productive employment through women's organisations, has been an effective weapon in their armour, "Productive employment" is not a class-neutral concept. The seekers of productive employment through co-operatives are the poor, lower middle class and working class women. Before joining the co-operatives they were either fully or partially unemployed. Moreover, since they were not part of an organised production process, wages were dismally poor. The co-operatives, theoretically at least, offered them a platform with government sanction, where they could get a more stable income.

It may be argued that the capitalist class can get cheap labour even without the help of the co-operatives as a buyer's market for unskilled labour prevails in the state. Direct recruitment and employment of labour by the capitalist involves risk. Firstly, there is the risk of unionisation of labour. Moreover, for big capitalists who operate in an all-India level, direct employment of labour creates diseconomies, which is totally absent in the case of supervised employment, i.e., employment by co-operatives.

The trading capitalists' interest in appropriating a sizeable portion of the value added in the trading process has been revealed by the sales pattern of some co-operatives. The typical examples are co-operatives engaged in manufacturing of candles, matches and readymade garments. Either for collusive action by the traders or for monopoly procurement by traders in some areas, the co-operatives are forced to sell at prices dictated by the former. Our survey shows that 41.17 per cent of the co-operatives sell to big private traders, while 35.29 per cent make it in the local market. It was found that the co-operative apex organisations also were controlled by trading capitalist interests, 11.76 per cent of the co-operatives were selling to these apex organisations.

The best example of capitalistic interests behind women's organisations has been Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation (KELTRON). The corporation started establishing direct links with some registered women's organisations such as co-operatives and societies in 1979. The professed objective of KELTRON has been to promote employment of rural women under its socio-economic programme. The relationship between the Corporation and the women's organisation has been one of parent-ancillary under which the former supplies electronic components to the latter for assembling against a service charge fixed by the former. There are 35

organisations including 21 cooperatives and 14 charitable societies acting as ancillaries of KELTRON, together providing a total employment of 700 women

It has been argued that since KELTRON is a public sector undertaking, it acts as the guarantor of the best interests of women workers. However, the Corporation, being dependent upon the export market and imported technology, satisfies the best interests of the foreign countries which have interest in it rather than the national interest of employment maximisation. Since technical training, raw materials, transportation, quality control and marketing of finished goods are all done by KELTRON, the chances of self-growth and leadership qualities by the co-operatives is prevented. Moreover, though the cooperatives are democratically constituted, they are, for all practical purposes, externally controlled because of the forward linkages. This, in turn, inhibits the growth of the spirit of cooperation and leadership qualities.

KELTRON's initiatives at ancillarisation should also be viewed in the light of international developments. The policy of export promotion during recent years by most developing countries and the relocation of industries in countries with cheap labour has changed the composition of working class in these countries by bringing in large number of young women into the work force.⁴¹ Primarily they are in the age group between 18-25 and are usually unmarried. Most of them are found in labour intensive industries such as garment-making and electronics which are export oriented. It should also be noted that these industries have been increasingly transplanted to the developing countries lured by the cheap labour available there.

The Catalytic Role of Caste/Communal Organisations

The caste/communal elements and organisations sponsored by them have been important tools of exploitation which the capitalists use in order to extract women's labour. The religious communities and caste organisations (especially the Christian Churches) who were the pioneers in forming charity-oriented women's organisations (called 'Social Centres') from 1880s itself, turned to women's societies since mid-1960s. Finding them to be a potential ally, the industrial and trading capitalists took active interest in them. Thus, the period succeeding 1975 marked a virtual boom of such women organisations. Though data regarding them have not been published, it is estimated that they have been the single largest category of women's organisations in Kerala.

The women's organisations sponsored by caste/communal elements was a superior organisational form to the interests of the trading and industrial capitalists. They served both the short run end of mobilisation of cheap labour (and consequently cheap products) and the long run end of non-politicisation of workers. The production centres run by social centres have been closely attached to and strictly supervised by the sponsors (such as convents, churches and monasteries and orphanages). The workers in these centres are mostly orphans and widows and women and children from poor

families of the caste/communities concerned. Since workers of these units are practically cut off from the outside world through strict supervision and vigilance by the employers, non-politicisation and non-trade unionisation is assured.⁴² Women's organisations sponsored by caste/communal elements are, for all practical purposes, strongly controlled by these elements. Therefore ancillarisation with such a production unit provides more assurance relating to the specified quantity and quality of the product and the time within which it will be supplied, compared to that with a more democratically constituted women's organisation.

An analysis of the social linkages of KELTRON-ancillaries showed that 65.69 per cent of them were linked with caste/communal organisations, Christian Churches (51.42 per cent), Nair Service Society (11.42 per cent), SNDP Yogam (2.85 per cent). The linkages of the remaining units could not be easily located.

The Privatisation of Women's Organisations : Recent Developments

As ordinary women got disillusioned with the working of mahila samajams, the industrial bourgeoisie found them as a relatively in-effective instrument as a source of cheap labour. The industrial bourgeoisies' successful intervention in women's cooperatives promoted them to think of organising mahila samajams also in new ways. This is reflected in the Kerala government's new strategy relating to promotion of mahila samajams.

The new strategy assumes, in essence, an idea of "growth centres" propagated by western capitalist economists. The growth centre concept assumes a 'non-growth situation' to begin with. According to this concept, the growth process can be initiated by either orienting the existing resources to create potential or by injecting potential from outside or by a combination of both.

Though the mahila samajams were capable of boosting up the morale and energy of rural women in early 1950s since 1960s, they lost much of their credibility. Moreover, at least in certain pockets, the left political parties could use them as instruments to conscientise and politicise women. The manufacturing and trading capitalist classes which had been using the samajams and cooperatives as instruments to serve their ends, in this context, thought of imposing more controls over them in the guise of financial discipline. While financial discipline is overemphasised, democracy of women's organisations is side-tracked. Even the political economy of promotion of cooperatives was basically to 'discipline' mahila samajams, which had some element of democracy in it, by confining them within a strait jacket of rules and regulations imposed by the government. This 'disciplining' reached its culmination with the intervention of KELTRON, as the women's organisations having meagre resources only could not but "obey" the former on a 'take it or not' basis. The recent policy of the government of Kerala in essence, attempts to link mahila samajams with national monopoly capital and international institutions. This, in essence, is related with the Inter-

national Cooperative Alliance (ICA) ideology of "internationalisation of cooperation" and western European models⁴³

Despite all limitations of mahila samajams, they have been institutionalised by adequate government support. It was observed that, at least in certain areas, women leaders (especially, those having some left orientation) have been using Block Union Mahila Samajams⁴⁴ as strong platforms where the rights of women have been advocated for. Another recent development has been the unionisation of staff of mahila samajams. All this shows that, women instead of remaining as silent exploitates, have started using their organisations as instruments to fight oppression and exploitation. The recent reorientation of employment policies relating to mahila samajams by the Government of Kerala should be viewed in this background.

The core of the new policy which was initiated in July, 1982 is a target group approach. It aims at creating 7200 self-employment units for people below the poverty line.⁴⁵ This scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 3.29 crores, is proposed to be implemented through 27 *selected* mahila samajams, who in turn will start women's industrial units. The original proposal has been to set up 7142 industrial units for industrial members of the samajams, while 130 units will be set up by the samajams themselves.

The capital participation of the scheme throws light upon the control mechanism. International funds (by way of UNICEF aid) constitutes a significant portion of Rs. 1.82 crores. Government control over the scheme is likely to be substantial as it contributes Rs. 41.48 lakhs (22.79 per cent) of the total outlay as subsidy. Banks provide 96.23 lakhs, while the samajams contribute only Rs. 6.63 lakhs (2.01 per cent). The remaining portion is contributed by KELTRON. Industrial bourgeoisie's control under the present scheme is likely to be more, as in the case of cooperatives, where electronics has been the major area of activity. The new scheme visualises an extension of this to many other activities and industries.

Under the 'target group' approach, the main area of activity of the samajams will be poultry, sheep-rearing, dairying, cultivation of vegetables, tailoring, handicrafts, match-making, weaving, making of pickles, paper cover making and book binding, bakery, embroidery, manufacture of plastic baskets and fish processing. Most of these units are meant for individual entrepreneurs who are members of the samajams, while activities such as manufacture of candles, puppets, soap, tiles, electronics, hosiery, printing and papad making are reserved for the samajams.

The signs of a strong control mechanism, which may kill whatever democracy these organisations have, are visible at the marketing ends. Samajams in 10 neighbouring villages are organised under a multipurpose cooperative society. Besides, a state level marketing organisation takes care of the marketing function at the state-level.

Conclusions

Employment schemes for women have been originally designed by the

ruling classes in order to conceal the increasing privatisation and subsidisation of women's work. Employment by no means is an absolute class-neutral concept. Organisations of women and political parties committed to the masses try to expose the real intentions of the ruling classes behind such employment schemes. However, it seems that they often fail to capture the specifics of these strategies and to fight them at the ideological level. How far the concerned women's organisations and political parties could deviate from the mainstream women's organisations/movements in this regard is an issue which deserves serious examination.

Paper presented in a Seminar on *Industrial Workers and Social Change* organised by Centre for Social Studies, Surat on 16-17 February, 1985 at Surat (Gujarat)

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45 *The Hindu* (Madurai), April 21, 1982

NIRMALA BANERJEE*

Modernisation and Marginalisation

A WELL-KNOWN FACT about the first industrial revolution that took place in Britain was the widespread participation by women and children in the industrial work force. This was especially true of its early phases. They had crowded into the "dark and satanic mills" in such large numbers that, at the time of the 1851 population census of Great Britain, women and girls in the textiles clothing industries constituted over half the total manufacturing employment and over one fifth of the entire non-agricultural work force of the country.¹ Women's participation in modern industry appeared to be such an integral part of the new industrial technology and organisation that Marx remarked "In so far as machinery dispenses with muscular power it becomes a means of employing labourers of slight muscular strength and those whose bodily development is incomplete but whose limbs are all the more supple. The labour of women and children was, therefore, the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery".²

Another important and novel change in the British economy after the onset of the industrial revolution was the fast expansion of an independent, non-agricultural, non-industrial sector of employment. Industries and agriculture had always existed side by side in the British economy, but the growth of such a service sector to an extent that it employed just under half the British labour force by 1911 was an entirely new phenomenon.³ The service sector included wholesale and retail trade, financial and commercial institutions, personal and professional services, transport and communications as well as public administration and welfare services. In the earlier stages, women in the service sector were confined mainly to domestic service, an occupation which had expanded fast in the 19th century along with the growth of a new urban bourgeoisie. After 1911, however, women moved out of domestic service to other sections of the service sector and by 1960s they held over half the total number of service sector jobs in the United Kingdom.⁴

As a result of women's large scale participation in modern activities both in the industrial as well as service occupations, there was an increasing dominance of women in rural to urban migration through the 19th century

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By the end of that century, urban areas of Great Britain showed a higher proportion of females to males at all ages than in rural areas.¹

This British pattern more or less formed the classic model for all countries of the west in their process of development towards a modern industrialised economy. However, the experience of women in the limited version of modern industrial growth that began to take place towards the last quarter of the 19th century in colonial Bengal was of an essentially different quality. Female workers formed only a small part of the work force in large scale industries, and in the service sector that developed as a part of this modern economy. Ultimately the only expanding occupation for women in the modern sector came to be domestic service. At the same time, these developments deeply affected the vast mass of the traditional, village-based economy which had continued to employ the majority of the workers. In the process, a significant section of women's non-agricultural occupations in the traditional sector were destroyed. As a result, women workers increasingly came to crowd into agricultural occupations. Their share in the urban population fell steadily till the end of the period under consideration.

This paper briefly attempts to analyse the reasons why the impact on female workers of modernisation of the Bengal economy was sharply different from that of their male counterparts and also from the model set by Britain in its early phases of industrial revolution.

Modernisation in the Indian context was more of an artificial graft on the body of the traditional economy than a metamorphosis of the latter through its own innate compulsions. It began when the British, after the establishment of their political hegemony over the region, started to invest in selected industries for processing local raw materials and agricultural products into commodities mainly for overseas markets. Simultaneously, in order to promote their political, administrative and economic interests, they were building a network of transport and communications and establishing institutions for imposing the British system of administration, finance, commerce, and judiciary as well as medicine and education. In order to promote these activities, they established support industries as well as facilities for training and building up professional services.

In pursuing their sectarian interests, the British showed little inclination to invest in or modernise the vast bulk of traditional economic activities which continued to serve the needs of the ordinary people. However, since the modern institutions and activities were infinitely more powerful not only because of their use of large scale capital, mechanised technology and modern organisations but also because of the state support given to them, they made strong inroads in the sphere of the traditional economy. In the process, sections of the latter were destroyed or altered to suit the purpose of the modern economy. Over time therefore, the structure and organisation of occupations in the traditional sector were also materially altered.

That women's economic activities were relatively more affected in this entire process, appears to be the result mainly of the traditional role assigned to women in this society which limited their mobility and confined them to

skills and occupations susceptible to swift obsolescence. Moreover, the growth of the modern sector was so fast and so unplanned that its environment became unwholesome for the migration of women whether in families or singly. This too inhibited women from participating in the modern sector to a greater extent.

The developments in the Bengal Presidency during the period 1881 to 1931 provide a specially interesting study because of several reasons:

a) Before 1881, Bengal was one of the more industrialized regions of India. Although most of its traditional industry had already been destroyed in the deindustrialisation process during the early 19th century, over 20 per cent of its work force was still working on "making and selling" of industrial goods. The all-India comparable figure for 1881 was 15 per cent.⁶

b) In the period under consideration, almost all of the modern activities of the region got established and expanded quickly, in some cases to nearabouts their maximum size upto date.

c) By the end of this period, Bengal again housed a major section of the modern industrial employment of India. The Royal Commission of Labour in India in its report of 1931 remarked that, "When the distribution of perennial factories is examined by centres, the predominance of Hooghly area surrounding Calcutta is noted."⁷ In 1929, the total factory labour of India was 15.5 lakhs, of these, Bengal had the largest single contingent of factory workers which stood at 5.9 lakhs.⁸

d) In Bengal, women workers had traditionally participated actively in non-agricultural activities. In 1881 only a third of the women workers of Bengal proper (as against the Presidency as a whole which also included Bihar and Orissa) had worked on agriculture. For the presidency as a whole, about 41 per cent of the workers in operations of 'making and selling' were women even in 1911.

e) As a result of the modernisation process, women of Bengal ultimately lost more heavily than perhaps anywhere else in the country. By 1961, West Bengal's work force participation rates for women were some of the lowest in the country. In Bihar and Orissa, women workers became almost totally confined to agriculture.⁹

The main data used in this paper for analysis of changes in the economy relates to employment figures by occupations and sexes. These have been culled from the decadal population Census Reports. In order to analyse the relative impact of the various forces at work, this data had been classified into two broad categories—the modern and the traditional sectors. The modern sector is not a very precise concept but includes all activities that were directly affected by the British influence. The latter is supposed to have altered either the scope of their markets, or their technology, organisation and content. As such it includes all production for extended markets. It also includes a service sector consisting of the administrative, the judicial, the commercial and financial institutions as well as transport and communication networks. From the total employment in trade, trade in food, fuel and fodder as well as

local construction materials has been excluded. The rest is included in the modern service sector. From the agriculture sector, it includes growing of special crops in plantations. Domestic service is a part of it but caste-based personal services have been excluded.

The definition is rather arbitrary since it includes for example, the entire textile industry, though a large component of it was handlooms which were often producing largely for local markets. It leaves out production of crops like jute, meant specifically for extended markets but employment for which could not be separated from other cultivation. Professions such as medicine continued throughout to include a traditional sector but have been fully allotted to the modern sector. The only advantage of such a loose definition is that it serves as an indicator of the relative dimensions of the various forces and changes in them over time, though it is probably an over estimate of the non-agriculture modern sector.

The Modern Sector

During the period under consideration, the state machinery of Bengal was constantly watching over the progress of the modern industries and services that were developing in the region. In the earlier half, their main concern was whether or not these occupations were getting adequate supply of seasonable labour. Reports of their various committees and Commissions as well as of individual experts (some of which are mentioned here) give an overall impression that the Bengal economy was in a tremendous upheaval. The Bengal Labour Enquiry Commission of 1896 categorically stated that "Europeans all agree that there is a scarcity of labour and regular imports are necessary". The Commission considered suggestions for importing labour to Bengal from N W provinces, Banares, Oudh, Lucknow and Fyzabad. They even talked about importing Chinese labour for coal mines.¹⁰ Even in 1908, there was some scarcity of skilled labour as for example in the cotton spinning mills of Calcutta.¹¹

This impression of a great flurry in the economy accompanied by a fear of scarcity of labour looming over it was chiefly because modern activities were confined to only a few pockets where local supply of and demand for labour were not always in balance. Also, modern activities did grow very fast within a short period from about 1890 to 1911 and after the 1st world war upto 1929. Three major industries developed in this region during this period—jute, tea and coal. Of these, the jute industry had started in 1860 and in 1880 it employed about 28 thousand factory workers. In the next three decades, its employment nearly doubled every ten years. Similarly employment in collieries more than doubled between 1891 to 1901 and went up by a further 175 per cent between 1901 and 1911. The employment in Bengal's tea gardens nearly trebled between 1881 and 1891 and again went up by an additional 270 per cent in the next decade. It also grew very fast during the 1920s.

As can be seen from table 1, these three industries together accounted for an increasing part of the labour force in registered industries of the Bengal

Table I
Employment in Registered factory industries in 000s

Year	Coal Industry			Jute Industry			Tea Plantations			All Registered Industries		
Bengal												
Bihar												
Orissa	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1879-80			14.4			27.5			n.a.			
1881			18.8			35.2			15.5			
1891			24.8			62.7			42.9			
1896-97			61.37			91.6			n.a.			
1901	26	25	51	87	36	123	83	76	159			
1906			106			133			n.a.			
1911	97	46	143	178	37	215	98	94	192	588	209	797
1911-15			129			n.a.			n.a.			n.a.
1921	107	43	150	335	48	383	88	102	190	685	232	917
1928	114	50	164						n.a.			n.a.
1931	115	30	145	229	32	261	186	120	306			n.a.
Bengal proper												
1901	11	12	23	87	36	123	83	76	159			n.a.
1911	27	11	38	178	37	215	98	94	192	454	163	617
1921	34	13	47	335	48	383	88	102	190	578	179	757
1931	24	9	36	229	32	261	174	114	288			n.a.

SOURCE For Coal Industry figures for years before 1901 are from the *Bengal Labour Enquiry Commission* Bengal Secretariat Calcutta 1896, p. 2

For years after that The Royal Commission of 1931, p. 113

For Jute Industry—B. Foley—*Report on Labour in Bengal*, Calcutta 1906, Chapter IIB—p. 14-47

For Tea Industry figures for 1891 are from the Bengal Labour Enquiry Commission, 1896

For Census Years, figures are from the Census reports

For 1911 and 1921 there are special tables No XXII giving Industrial Statistics

Presidency In 1911 their share had been 68 per cent. This rose to 77 per cent by 1921. Amongst the rest were several metal-based industries including railway workshops, armament industry and light engineering industries. Also of significant size were glass and pottery works, cotton spinning, silk filatures and leather tanning. As table 1 indicates, women's employment in the modern industries was however, overwhelmingly confined to the major three industries. In 1911, they employed 86 per cent of the women working in registered factories and in 1921, this figure had gone up to 91 per cent. In other words, women played a very minor role in any of the other modern industries.

It is to be noted that within these three industries, women's share in the total employment declined steeply towards 1931. In jute industry, women's share in total employment fell from 29 per cent in 1901 to 17 per cent in 1911 and 12 per cent in 1921. In collieries, women lost their initial advantage after

1901 but their share fell particularly steeply in a short period after 1928 when they were banned from underground work. Even in tea plantations, women's employment lost its momentum during the depression years.

It is interesting to note that in each of the three industries different factors were at work to produce fairly similar results over time. In jute industry, women simply failed to get their due share in the work force in the period after 1901 when the industry was expanding fast. In collieries on the other hand, women were literally pushed out of the industry after underground work by women and children became prohibited in 1928. It is interesting to note that the ban against underground work by women became operative only in 1928 though the legal powers were available to the State since 1901. In the first two decades of this century, female and child labour was in demand for carrying coal underground, since no substitute male labour was available as cheaply. In 1928, when the economy was already slowing down and male labour was cheaply available, the law was made operative. Even then, in view of the large numbers of women working underground in collieries, the State had recommended that their removal from the work should be phased out over a period of ten years. In 1928, 29 per cent of underground coal labour was female, each year 3 per cent of these were to be retired. In actual fact, within the next year a quarter of the underground women workers were eased out of their jobs.¹²

So, in collieries women were pushed out of their jobs by men when they needed women's jobs. In tea industry, women's labour has always been considered essential, but even there in the depression years of 1931, women lost their advantage and for the time being, the balance of employment tilted steeply in favour of men, presumably because men were available in greater number for want of other jobs.

Modern Services

The other new venues of employment in the modern sector were in the new kind of services being created in India. It was particularly after 1881 that the earlier dithering about investment in Indian railways was resolved,¹³ and there was a fast expansion of railway lines. In Bengal Presidency, their length increased from 2072 km in 1881 to 4542 km in 1901 and 8403 km by 1931.¹⁴ Similarly, the government also went in a big way for building metalled roads in the country. British India as a whole had nearly 100,000 kms. of roads by 1929 and along with them, motor transport as well as public buses, had become a common sight in all parts of the country including Bengal.¹⁵ However, despite all these developments, employment in the category transport, communications and storage showed a stagnant or declining trend mainly because the growth of mechanised transport displaced more people from traditional water and road transport industries than it itself employed (Table 2).

Modern transport facilities had opened up more and more areas for trade, Cummins remarks "Often people found it more lucrative to take an agency for distribution of some imported commodity rather than go in for

Table II
Modern Service Sector in '000s

	1901				1911				1921				1931			
	Bengal		Bihar & Orissa		Bengal		Bihar & Orissa		Bengal		Bihar & Orissa		Bengal		Bihar & Orissa	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
I Administration, liberal arts and learned professions (excepting priests and mid-wives)	241	6	136	5	257	14	134	7	253	6	101	11	288	9	117	6
II Domestic Service	177	83	121	125	255	112	227	215	334	116	184	124	389	361	99	107
III Trade, Commerce and Finance (except local trades)	201	14	60	18	262	47	150	71	193	23	155	70	394	27	183	52
IV Transport, Communication and storage	317	9	101	5	469	31	240	13	355	18	98	17	270	12	91	—
IV-A Railways	34	1	20	1	74	2	34	2	43	2	35	2	67	2	32	1
Total	936	112	418	153	1243	204	751	306	1235	163	538	292	1341	409	490	165

Figures are approximate since over time, census scope of trade activities kept on changing

industrial enterprise”¹⁶ However, once again the displacement in traditional trade occupations was not fully compensated by these new openings

Of the various occupations included amongst the modern services, the only one to expand fast over this period for both men and women was domestic service. However, for men, the occupation at its maximum employed no more than a third of the total employed in the modern service sector. For women in both Bengal and Bihar domestic service was a much more important venue. Especially in Bengal, after a brief respite in 1911, it generally accounted for over 70 per cent of women workers in modern services. And in 1931, when they had been pushed out of their industrial employment, domestic service became about the only important non-agricultural occupation. Interestingly in Bihar and Orissa, the occupation could give little respite to job seekers even during depression years. This was presumably connected with the general decline of urban areas in those regions which we discuss later on. This position continued unchanged till recently (Table 2)

Traditional Sector

Table 3 shows some rough estimates of the relative sizes of the various categories of employment. The modern sector consists of the two groups D—production and trade for extended markets and E—modern services as defined earlier. The traditional sector consists of A—agriculture and general labour, B—traditional personal services consisting of numerous caste-based occupations such as barbers, washermen, sweepers, priests, midwives and C—production and trade for local markets. It is to be noted that the category E—is larger than the group of registered industries or large scale trade. It also includes several traditional industries, especially textiles which had always been traded in extensive markets from Bengal. Of these, cotton handlooms had lost their international markets since the 1830s, but they still found markets outside their immediate locality. Markets for silk spinning waxed and waned but were still spread over a large area. Production and trade in these industries is also included under D, on grounds that western interests had intervened in their working at some time or another and changed their internal organisation to some degree.

In spite of the official pre-occupation with modern activities, the overwhelming bulk of Bengal's economic activities employment in the modern sector reached its maximum size within this period, it employed less than 15 per cent of the total work force and less than five per cent of the total population.

The more dramatic changes in this period, were also taking place in the traditional sector. The most remarkable development was the increasing concentration of the work force into agriculture. The share of agriculture in total employment of both men and women kept on rising even though population was growing very slowly. Between 1901 and 1921, total population of the Bengal Presidency grew by only about 9 per cent. In Bihar and Orissa, there was a fall in the population between 1911 and 1921 (Table 4). In spite of

Table III
Work Force Participation Rates and Distribution of Work Force by Broad Categories Bengal Proper and Bihar and Orissa
BENGAL

Year	A		B		C		D		E		Workforce* Partici- pation Rates	
	Agriculture and General Labour		Traditional Personal Service		Production and Trade for LocalMarket		Production and Trade for extended Markets		Modern Services		Workforce* Partici- pation Rates	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
1981	70.3	32.2	10.4	13.3	16.2	43.2 ^{a.1}	3.1	11.2			58.3	8.7
1901	75.3	40.9	3.9	9.9	9.5	33.3	3.2	10.4	8.1	5.5	58.6	8.8
1911	78.8	48.7	2.0	8.7	8.3	28.2	3.2	11.5	7.6	2.9	59.0	9.0
1921	78.2	54.1	1.6	6.0	8.6	21.0	4.3	11.9	7.3	6.1	57.1	8.5
1931	79.0	55.9	1.6	4.6	7.2	11.8	7.3	8.7	5.0	19.0	46.7	7.0

BIHAR & ORISSA

Year	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Agriculture and General Labour		Tradinonal Service		Production and Trade for LocalMarket		Production and Trade for extended Markets		Modern Services		Workforce* Partic- pation Rates	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
1881	77 0	70 5	7 1	3 9	31 3	17 9*2	2 6	7 7	2 3	2 4	66 5	25 4
1901	82 8	74 1	3 2	4 5	7 9	16 6	1 8	2 4	2 3	2 4	63 0	28 3
1911	83 2	78 6	1 9	2 3	5 3	13 1	2 3	2 4	3 5	4 0	62 2	33 0
1921	84 7	81 7	2 8	2 0	5 2	11 2	3 7	3 0	3 6	2 2	63 3	35 0
1931	86 2	83 9	4 3	2 2	5 1	10 5	2 5	1 0	1 9	2 3	57 3	25 1

SOURCE Census Reports for Bengal Bihar and Orissa, Volumes-Part II, Tables—Summary of Occupations

Note *1 Work Force estimates exclude persons with independent means, rent earners and also persons in "disreputable occupation" (including vagrants and prostitutes)

*2 For 1881

that, the share of agriculture and general labour generally kept on increasing throughout this period. For women workers, especially in Bengal proper, this was a very significant change in their traditional role. Again, this trend continued unchanged till in 1961, when the percentage-share of women workers in agriculture in the total female work force was 58 per cent in West Bengal, 84 per cent in Bihar and 71 per cent in Orissa.

The concentration of women workers in agriculture was a direct result of a sharp fall in their traditional activity of making and selling goods whether in the modern or in the traditional sector.

Table IV
Sex Distribution of Total Population, 1881-1931

Year	<i>Bihar & Orissa with Chotanagabur</i>		<i>Bengal Proper</i>		<i>Total Bengal</i>	
	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Total Population</i>			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1881	16 499	16,894	18,570	18,451	35069	35345
1891	17,597	18,301	20,175	14,637	37772	32938
1901	17,852	18,698	21,885	21,003	39737	39701
1911	18,851	19,616	23,804	22,502	42655	42118
1921	18 707	19,248	24,628	22,964	43335	42212
1931	21,082	21,247	26,558	24,529	47640	45776

SOURCE: Census of India, General Tables, 1881-1931 Office of the Registrar General of India

For both men and women there was an initial fall from 1881 to 1901 in the number of workers and the share in the total work force of this category but thereafter, as the modern sector expanded, the total number of jobs for men and the share of this sector in total work force was maintained at more or less an unchanged level. For women, on the other hand, there was a continuous fall from 1901 onwards in both the absolute number of jobs and their share in the work force (Table 5).

Moreover, with the category of occupations "making and selling", women workers were concentrated more heavily in the traditional sector where their domain was confined to local markets (column C of Table 3). For men, this was never a very important occupation and their losses also were percentage-wise relatively smaller.

Urbanisation

Changes in the composition of urban settlements was another development of this period which significantly affected women's position. The overall rate of urbanisation was by no means fast but it was spread extremely unevenly between different regions. In general, urban population of Bihar and Orissa fell in absolute numbers till 1911. Thereafter it rose very slowly

Table V

Employment in industrial production and trade (making and selling) (000s)

Year	Bengal		Bihar & Orissa	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1881	2182 (20 16)	1018 (56 97)	1479 (15 85)	1010 (25 10)
1901	1510 (12 65)	707 (43 69)	1064 (9 64)	1028 (18 96)
1911	1490 (11 50)	700 (40 34)	820 (7 53)	960 (15 56)
1921	1681 (12 89)	661 (33 13)	905 (7 91)	887 (14 13)
1931	1737 (14 54)	501 (26 46)	850 (7 49)	675 (14 08)

Figures in brackets are percentages to total workforce

and in 1931 it stood at a level higher than the 1881 level by only one sixth. The fall in urban population was mainly on account of falling female population but nevertheless, the sex ratio in urban population of Bihar and Orissa was never as adverse to women as in Bengal.

In Bengal proper, male urban population rose throughout, female population after a small dip between 1881 and 1891 rose steadily but at a much slower rate so that the urban sex ratio fell continuously till 1931. The urban sex ratio for the Presidency as a whole also fell continuously (Table 6).

The various developments noted so far together meant that women got increasingly marginalised in the Bengal economy. They became confined to a very limited set of occupations—chiefly in agriculture and in domestic service. These trends became deeply entrenched into the pattern so that for the next 50 years or so, women have remained at a disadvantage in the economy of this region. How did this come about?

Women's Role in the Economy

Two sets of factors contributed to the worsening of women's economic position, their traditional role in the economy slowly became redundant while their gains in the modern sector remained negligible. The occupations assigned to women in the traditional gender-wise division of labour proved to be specially vulnerable to obsolescence through modernisation. Their participation in the modern sector on the other hand was constrained particularly by the character of the modern sector as it developed in Bengal.

Traditionally women worked in three kinds of occupations, in superior crafts for extended markets where they worked either in the household unit as helpers or on their own selling their products to agents. By this period, hand spinning of cotton yarn had become almost obsolete. The 1881 Census

Table 6
Urban Population

	Bengal (Urban)			Bihar & Orissa (Urban)			Totally	Urban Presi- dency Urban Pop as% of Total popula- tion	Sex Ratio	Urban Ratio	Sex Ratio for Bengal Presi- dency
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			Bengal	Bihar & Orissa	
1881	1199	986	2185	728	736	1464	5.24	822	1011	893	
1891	1297	927	2224	634	679	1313	4.92	715	1071	831	
1901	1563	1036	2599	668	659	1327	5.00	663	986	759	
1911	1820	1148	2968	685	638	1323	5.06	631	931	713	
1921	1992	1220	3212	751	659	1416	5.42	612	877	685	
1931	2318	1394	3712	768	1700	5.79	601	824	665	665	

had recorded only 200 thousand spinners in the whole of Bengal.¹⁸ In 1812 there had been thousand spinners in Patna and Gaya districts alone.¹⁹ But handloom weaving was still a common household industry in which women worked mainly as helpers. In silk industry they were mainly engaged in rearing the silk worm cocoons but they also worked as spinners both in large filature factories as well as on their own. In 1901, about 135 thousand women in Bengal Presidency worked in the cotton spinning, weaving and dying industry. Almost all of them worked in the household units. Another 45 thousand women worked in the silk industry.²⁰ It is worth noting that whereas in the 18th century, cotton spinning had been an occupation which women of almost all castes had practiced in order to make a cash income,²¹ by the beginning of 20th century the household textile industry had largely become specific only to certain castes.

Next, women worked in other caste specific occupations like potters, washer women, sweepers etc. In 1901 these caste-based occupations employed about 200 thousand women in the Presidency as a whole. In most of these caste occupations, women had no independent role or income but worked as part of the household team. Only midwives and barber women had specific functions for which they got separate payment. These caste occupations included some superior crafts as in the case of cotton weavers or silk cocoon rearers.

The more important occupations for women however were in a number of subsistence crafts. These consisted of tasks that women generally performed for their own families but occasionally extended for sale in markets. They included animal husbandry and making and selling of milk products like ghee or butter, grain and pulse processing, making of simple food pro-

ducts like 'moori or chire', preparing vegetable oil for lighting as well as collecting, processing and selling forest produce. More specific examples are rice pounding, flour grinding, making of leaf plates, baskets, mats, nets, brooms, producing rock salt, collecting and selling of fuel and fodder. The distinguishing characteristics of all these occupations were a) they used only locally available cheap materials, b) the production used crude and locally made tools, c) there was very little regional specialisation, d) the occupations needed no special training and little capital investment.

In 1881 as against 1.2 million women working in agriculture, about 725 thousand had worked on food processing and selling. Of these, about 500 thousand worked on grain processing. Another 200 thousand worked in collecting, processing and selling forest produce, 340 thousand worked on caste specific occupation exclusive of superior crafts. In 1901, about 462 thousand women still worked on grain processing and another 200 thousand on collecting, processing and selling forest produce. Altogether about 1.4 million women had worked in occupations connected with traditional industries and sale of their products.

The advantage of this kind of employment in subsistence crafts had been that, since the occupations were generally no different from standard household chores, any women of any caste or community could resort to them in case of distress. There were no barriers, social taboos or purdah to prevent them since the dealings were mostly confined between women.

However, in order to sustain this sector of employment on such a large scale, the economy needed sufficient supply of local, freely available materials and also some degree of isolation from competition of outside goods. Towards the latter half of our period, these conditions began to weaken for the major part of Bengal's economy. The new transport network exposed ever-widening areas to outside competition and increasing commercialisation. By 1931, women's employment in these subsistence crafts and trade had fallen by over a third of its level in 1911.²² Their biggest losses were in food processing and in occupations dealing with forest products. For example rice milling had largely become a factory industry by the 1920s, in 1929 there were only 12500 persons working in rice milling factories in Bengal, and amongst these, women were employed only in the drying process.²³ Caste occupations in general were also disintegrating fast. In 1921 only about 130 thousand women worked in these caste specific occupations including traditional services as well as some occupations of making and selling. There are potters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, banglemakers, metal workers. In case of Bengal, tailors included a large section who were working in a ready-made garment industry in Calcutta.²⁴

The main reasons for these losses were a) because women's crafts were basically for common day to day necessities, there was potentially a large market for such commodities in the region as a whole. Therefore, once the areas were opened up for modern transport, there were tremendous profits to be made in trade in ordinary commodities like sea salt, coal or kerosene which replaced the earlier crude, local goods made by women. The trade in

these commodities involved substantial capital as well as information and mobility over a large areas. Hence it passed on to men. b) because of their simple tools and low capital input, women's productivity in these crafts had been very low, c) the operations were by and large simple and could be easily mechanised. As a result of these factors—the wide and regular demand and the simple character of the processes, it paid to mechanise operations like rice pounding, grain milling or oil crushing and women could not compete with the machine made products because of their initial low productivity. d) at the same time increasing commercialisation and pressure on land resources meant that the free availability of products of forests and common lands was being sharply curtailed. These factors also led to a quick decline in the practice of payment by land grant or a fixed annual amount of grains to the workers in caste occupations. It was now being replaced by payment by product. This meant that fewer people could rely on these occupations for a living. Women's employment in these kind of occupations also declined by nearly a third from 1921 to 1931.

Restrictions on Women's Workforce Participation

The decline in subsistence crafts left women all the more helpless because earlier they had not fully shared in the gains made by men in the modern sector. Employment in this latter sector probably could never have fully compensated for the decline of traditional occupations. But the fact still remains that although in the first half of this period there were pockets of local shortages in supply of women's labour to modern occupations, sufficient number of women did not make the transition from the traditional to the modern sectors. According to contemporary reports, Bengal's cotton spinning mills could not expand fast because of want of labour, especially women's and skilled labour, even when handloom weaving had got a fresh lease of life in the wake of the Swadeshi movement.²⁵ Same was the case in collieries in the 1890s and from time to time in the tea industry.²⁶ In jute industry it was shown earlier that in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century when the industry expanded fastest, women failed to claim their due share in the employment. It was reported that even in 1923, any women could, if she wanted, work simultaneously in two mills in two consecutive shifts on the same day and many did.²⁷

One important factor contributing to this state of affairs was the fact that unlike traditional economic activities, modern occupations were not evenly spread everywhere, they were concentrated in a few small pockets. Those small pockets moreover were precisely in areas where women's workforce participation rates (wfpr) had traditionally been very low. The most important nodes of modern activities were, Calcutta and its surrounding districts for jute and engineering factories as well as modern services, North and East Bengal for cultivation, processing and trade in tea and other commercial crops, and Burdwan division for collieries.

As can be seen in table 7 in the first five administrative divisions which constituted Bengal proper, female wfprs were remarkably low. What is more,

Table 7
Region-wise Sex Ratios No. of Women Per 1000
Men and Women's Work Force Participation
Rates 1911 and 1931

Regions Administrative Division	1911		1931	
	Sex Ratio	Women's Work Force Participa tion Rates	Sex Ratio	Women's Work Force Participa tion Rates
Burdwan	980	11.2	978	9.1
Presidency	962	7.6	951	6.5
Rajshahi	971	6.3	963	5.8
Dacca	979	5.7	968	5.6
Chittagong	983	7.3	980	6.3
Patna	1041	35.2	1062	31.7
Bhagalpore	1053	32.8	1071	30.1
Orissa	1021	8.3	1030	7.4
Chota Nagpur	1039	25.7	1042	24.0

this was not a result of the low share allotted to women in modern activities, but a consistent trend throughout the period as can be seen from table 3. Rather, events seemed to work the other way round—the traditionally low wfprs of women in these areas meant that women did not seek out jobs in the modern activities or, more precisely, social and cultural taboos constrained their responses to market forces much more so than they affected men.

In their decisions as to whether or not to participate in economic activities and if so in which occupations, women were not free agents, they were severely constrained by the conventions and taboos accepted by the particular social group, caste or community to which they belonged. These rules were by no means uniform but varied widely from one area to another and between different social groups, castes or communities. The conventions governing each group were historically determined by the interaction of many factors, not the least amongst which were the social status and the past record of well-being of that group as a whole. Women from groups with higher social states and/or higher incomes were subject to more restrictions. In areas where there was a general feeling of prosperity, the conventions were all the more binding on women. In other areas and groups where there was a long history of general distress, the system faced a continuous challenge from within and the rules were gradually eroded.

The Dufferin report "on the conditions of the lower classes of people in Bengal" submitted to the Viceroy in 1888²⁸ brings out admirably this play of factors determining women's workforce participation rates. For the report, officers in charge of each district or administrative subdivision submitted a

review of the area under their charge detailing out the general economic conditions of the population, the relative fortunes of different traditional occupations—their wage rates and prospects—and the availability or otherwise of alternative jobs for them. What is more, almost all officers included in their reports a quick review of women's occupations and the extent of workforce participation by women of different groups in their locality. They also made an effort to link these local conventions regarding women's work with the immediate economic conditions and prospects of the group concerned. For example, it was remarked about the Burdwan Division that "the wives and children of a poor cultivator or labourers who is in ordinary health are not required to resort to outdoor work"²⁹ Similarly, A. Smith reporting on the Presidency Division mentioned that in Khulna with increasing prosperity all families had rice for every meal and except perhaps the women of potter families, no woman either in cultivator or in artisan families worked outside.³⁰ Mr. Lyall, the Commissioner of Chittagong Division noted that unlike in most other districts, women of Chittagong district were not to be seen even in huts or markets.³¹ On the other hand, Mr. Stevens, Commissioner of the Chota Nagpur Division reported that although the population was fairly well off since collieries were absorbing labour from that region, nevertheless, locally there was still one woman worker for every two of men.³² In Patna and Gaya districts, where distress was most acute and people could eat rice only once a day, men and women both worked on their own agricultural holdings and also as wage labourers for others.³³ In Bhagalpore, women of lower classes helped in cultivation of own plots.³⁴ Mr. C. Worsley, Commissioner Pooni Division mentioned that even after three years of crop failure, few women were to be found to work on road or earth cutting.³⁵

In each case, the rules were determined for the groups as a whole. Individual women in isolated cases of poverty or distress could not defy them. For those women, the only way was to crowd into the two occupations in which participation was permitted for most sections of women. Domestic service was one such. (Even Brahmin women could work as cooks in other families). The most common occupation of course was food processing—especially rice pounding. In fact Mr. Ritchie, Magistrate of Howrah District had reported that "rice pounding plays an important role in the village economy".³⁶

It is important to note that work in modern mills was probably not tabooed in the early part of this period, nevertheless, only poor women and women of low castes joined the mills and considered it generally as last resort in case of distress. The Bengali women workers in Calcutta's jute and cotton mills who gave evidence to the Indian Factory Commission of 1890 were all widows or deserted women without children to support them. They all claimed that no Bengali women would work in the factories unless she was truly "unfortunate".³⁷

Women's Migration .

This brings us to another interesting question, even if the location of

modern activities happened to be in regions of low female wfpr, the Presidency as a whole included other areas viz, most of Bihar, where female wfpr were high by any standards. Moreover in the period under consideration, women of those areas underwent severe losses in their traditional economic activities as discussed earlier (see table 5)

Men had also suffered similar losses, but that had triggered off a tremendous wave of male migration from Bihar and Orissa to Bengal in search of work. As a result, there were increasingly more men as compared to women in Bengal, especially urban Bengal and more women than men in Bihar and Orissa (Table 4 & 6). There were several strands of migration as noted by the 1896 Labour Enquiry Commission

- a) From the Santhal Parganas mainly from Ranchi and Singhbhum to the tea gardens
- b) From the eastern districts of North West Provinces and Western districts of Bihar to East Bengal and Assam for harvesting or road and railway building
- c) From Ranchi and other places in Hazaribag area to Calcutta for drainage work, gardening etc
- d) From North West Provinces and Bihar to Calcutta for jute mills
- e) From Chota Nagpur area to collieries in Burdwan division and to Sylhet for tea gardens
- f) Tribals from Oudh and Jabalpur to coal mines in Jharia and Ranigunge

Already in 1895, about half of Calcutta's mill workers were up-country people³⁸

These migrations were not random movements for seeking any kind of work but specific, point-to-point movements triggered off by changes in relative wage rates and opening up of new work opportunities in different areas. For example, the Ranigunge coal mining industry was expanding fast in early 1890s and daily wages had gone up from 7½ annas 1890 to 8½ annas in 1892. However, immediately there was an influx of labour mainly from Hazaribag area and Santhal Parganas which brought down the daily wage rate to 6 annas in 1894. In the meanwhile, the daily rate of unskilled agricultural labour in Hazaribag went up by 50 per cent between 1890 to 1894. On the other hand although there was always talk about scarcity of skilled labour in Calcutta, their daily wage rate remained steady at about 15 annas from 1885 to 1894³⁹ and did not go up significantly even by 1905-06⁴⁰

Nor did there appear to be any reluctance on the part of men to change occupations or to live in the novel environment of urban industrial locations

As against this remarkable degree of mobility shown by men in response to changing economic conditions, women of the Bengal Presidency by and large remained in their own villages. It was only the tribal women who joined these various strands of migration in significant numbers. They moreover

went mainly in families to tea gardens of North and East Bengal as well as Assam. To a much lesser extent tribal families also moved to collieries in Ranigunge and Jharia areas but very few women, whether tribal or otherwise, joined their menfolk in migrating to urban areas.

This immobility on the part of women has often been explained in terms of the attitudes of the newly forming urban industrial workforce. This labour was said to be less than fully committed to the modern sector and wanting to keep intact his rural linkages and economic base.⁴¹ For this purpose, his best way to retain his rights to the family land and dwelling was to keep his wife and children on the family property participating in the family activities no matter how low their productivity in it.⁴²

This explanation was probably valid in the case of the first wave of upcountry migrants who came to Calcutta's factories. The city was unknown and their notions about work and working conditions in the factories still unclear, so single males came to the city as adventurers. These first batch of migrants could very well belong to the class of cultivators and artisans of the village who were not totally rootless. However, this logic cannot fully explain the trends in the period following the initial wave of migration of upcountry workers. The workers had developed a regular pattern by which they went home for a few months but came back to the same mill area. Presumably the same sardar was their link to mill areas. Also, it has been shown quite clearly that by 1911 about 30 per cent of the jute mill workers came from low caste or artisan occupations which no longer had any role in the village economy. Another 30 per cent were Muslims who probably also belonged to the category of uprooted artisans.⁴³ In general, quite a large section of the workers had no commitment in the form of land or a livelihood in their native villages. They could in principle have settled in urban areas with their families rather than keep on trying to retain their rural base by remitting back a portion of their earnings to maintain their families or try to build up rural assets. Also, though the wages of a single worker were probably not sufficient to maintain a family in urban surroundings, Calcutta's jute mill workers could have worked there 'enfamille'. As mentioned before, there was considerable demand for women and child labour in jute mills till their rationalisation in late 1920s.

The reasons why workers did not bring their wives and children to work in jute mills as they did in the Bombay Cotton Mills are not easy to divine. Folklore appeared to have identified Calcutta and the jute industry with single men. Songs of village women from Bihar describe the mills and Calcutta as the villians who separated them from their husbands and lovers. Going to Calcutta's jute mills was regarded rather like going to the battle fields. If your man came back triumphant he would cover you with gold, but the Bengal soil may suck him in or he may be seduced by some woman there. So one waited and hoped but could never dream of following him there.⁴⁴

A possible reason for regarding Calcutta as clearly another and totally alien world could be the extremely unpalatable environment that had

evolved around Calcutta's jute area by that time. This environment has been described with great objectivity in a report submitted by Dr Dagmar Curjel of the Women's Medical Service of India to the Government of Bengal in 1923.⁴⁵ Her report is written in an extremely low key but nevertheless reads like a horror story. In the mill area almost none of the women lived in regular families. Each woman had to live under the protection of some man but was not married to him. Upcountry men did not bring their wives but lived with local Bengali women. Dr Curjel succinctly reported "Respectable Bengali women do not undertake industrial work and practically all such Bengalis found in the mills are degraded women or prostitutes."⁴⁶ The Assistant Director of Public Health giving evidence to the Royal Commission of Labour in 1930 also said about the jute areas that "There is practically open prostitution near the workers' homes and most of the workers do not bring their women folk for that reason — No privacy is possible under present conditions of housing. Amongst female workers, one out of four admits to being a prostitute."⁴⁷

The other major contingent of migrant workers were called Madrasis though they were mainly Telugu and Oriya speaking. The Telugu workers brought women of their own communities with them but were seldom married to them. These women were shared between themselves and sometimes with Oriya men but if any one of them took up with an upcountry man, there was trouble. The woman had no choice in this.⁴⁸

Each woman had to support herself by working in the mills and had to hand over her earnings, often supplemented by prostitution on the side, to the man with whom she lived.⁴⁹ Often a woman had to work in two mills in two shifts because her earnings in one job were extremely meagre.⁵⁰ Mill managers felt that giving cash benefits or paid leave for maternity would not help women because they would only have to hand over the money to the man and would probably be sent to work elsewhere. Dr Curjel agreed with their reading.⁵¹

The Bengali women were specially sickly and disease-ridden.⁵² The rates of venereal diseases, sterility, child mortality and even infanticide⁵³ were very high. One mill manager reported that 50 per cent of his workers were suffering from syphilis⁵⁴ and the mill had refused to treat them because it worked out very expensive.

The saddest comment was "none of the women who once come to the jute mills ever go back to their own country."⁵⁵ Men went back from time to time and retired to their native villages when old or sick. They sent money to their relatives, but none of the women even sent any money to anybody.⁵⁶ In other words, for women, jute lines was the end of the road.

This is to be contrasted with the position in 1890 when, according to the evidence given to the Indian Factory Commission, women in jute mills were distressed but not social outcasts. For example, Taroni, a bagdi woman working in Baranagore Branch Jute Mill had claimed that she visited her relatives once or twice a year. Another witness Rajoni of weaver caste working in Calcutta Jute Mill had told the Commission that a lot of little girls and also

married women with children worked in jute mills ⁵⁷

The main reason for this state of affairs were the terrible housing conditions in the jute mill area since the beginning of 20th century Dr Curjel mentions this Radhakamal Mukherjee specially emphasised the point that the Hoogly reverain around Calcutta showed some of the heaviest concentration The fast growth of various mill towns between 1911 and 1931 had given a bonus to local landlords who had leased out the land to mill employers and sardars to build unplanned bustees "to utilize the available space to maximum extent such is the way in which these single huts are built up at all angles that there is little of the privacy which the Indian woman requires for her daily routine of household duties ⁵⁸ The situation in mill lines built by employers where the total area available per worker was 29 sq ft to 79 sq ft was little better than in the bustees ⁵⁹

It was only a few upcountry Muslim women who came to jute mills in families The entire family would work on hand sewing of gunny bags Often women worked within the mills but as unregistered labour Muslim weaver women came to the factory lines but did not work Their husbands superior position as skilled workers enabled them to rig up some privacy even within the worker's quarters ⁶⁰

The male dominance of the cities thus became a self-sustaining process Initially it was mainly men who came to the city because migrants were unsure of the new surroundings and wanted to keep their links with the familiar surroundings of the village But since Calcutta could draw on a vast hinterland stretching up to North-west provinces at one end and the Telugu speaking region at the other, more and more men found their way into the city to meet the very fast expanding demand for labour there As plentiful migrant labour was available inspite of the terrible housing and sanitary conditions of the mill lines and bustees, employers made no attempt to improve those conditions And as this process of male dominance and crowding in awful housing continued, it became more and more unthinkable for workers to bring their own families into the mill areas A chronicle of life around mill areas in this period would read rather like the history of Dodge city or Wyoming except that we have no record of a wild Bill Hickock ⁶¹

Conclusion .

Modernisation, as it came to Bengal was essentially an extremely limited process super-imposed by outside forces In its wake however, it changed the traditional economy in a material way In general this meant that workers of the region, both men and women were made increasingly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood Men were somewhat more fortunate, the bulk of the employment opportunities in the modern sector went to them and after 1931 the share of agriculture in male work force decline steadily For women, the process meant a permanent shift towards the periphery of the economy Their non-agricultural occupations in the traditional sector suffered a serious setback mainly because of the intervention of the modern sec-

tor into the village economy. Women had neither the skills nor the capital to resist these changes.

Nor were they in a position to claim their share in the modern sector though, at least initially, employment opportunities had been created for them in those activities. The traditional society had always imposed stringent constraints on their mobility between regions and occupations.

Therefore, the mere fact that jobs were available did not always bring forth an immediate response from the local female population. However, this reluctance of local women to join the mills in larger numbers did not really create any problems for the mills. The demand of the modern sector was in fact so small compared to the negative impact it had created in the traditional sector that any fresh increase in demand was quickly met by more and more very needy workers pouring into the city from further and further afield.

As a result, the living conditions in the jute area became totally unpalatable in a short while. The nightmarish surroundings of the mills put an almost total stop to women from other regions migrating in large numbers for work in Calcutta mills. This created a tradition of male domination in urban and industrial surroundings in the Bengal region which is yet to be fully corrected.

- 1 Phyllis Deane & W A Cole *"The British Economic Growth 1688-1954"* Second Ed. Cambridge University Press 1969, pp 143, 190, 111
- 2 Karl Marx *Capital, Vol I*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p 372
- 3 Deane & Cole *op cit* p 146
- 4 R M Hartwell *"The Service Revolution: The Growth of services in the Modern Economy, 1700-1914"* in C M Cipolla ed *The Industrial Revolution* Second Edn. 1975 pp 361-362
- 5 John Saville "As quoted by T G McGee in *The Urbanization Process in the Third World, Explorations in Search of a Theory*, London, G Bell & Sons, 1979, p 101
- 6 Alice Thorner "Women's work in Colonial India 1881-1931" paper presented to the *Seventh European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies*, London, July 1981. Tables C and D
- 7 Government of India *The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India 1929-31*, Delhi 1932 /Vol II/ p 603, (henceforth referred to as *Royal Commission of 1931*)
- 8 R N Gilchrist *Indian Labour and Land*, Government of Bengal Press, Calcutta 1932 pp 3
- 9 See Table No 3 and Table No 6. Also J N Sinha *The Indian Work Force* Monograph No 11, Vol 1, Census of India 1961, Registrar General of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi 1972 Table 8, pp 24-25
- 10 *Report of Bengal Labour Commission 1896* (Calcutta 1896 (Henceforth referred to as *1896 Labour Commission*) pp 15-17

- 11 J G Cummins *Review of the Industrial Position and Prospects in Bengal in 1908* Part II—Sp Report Calcutta 1908
The Indian Factory Commission 1890 Report Vol II gives the evidence of H M Scott of the Hasungs Jute Mill (witness No 162) who claimed that labour in his mill was very short in April, May and June
- 12 *Royal Commission of 1931*, Vol I pp 113-115
- 13 Daniel Thorner *The Land and labour of India*, Bombay Asia Publishing House, 1974 chp
- 14 Government of India, Ministry of Railways *History of the Indian Railways Constructed and in Progress* corrected upto Mar 31, 1964, Delhi 1966 pg 2
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MARJORIE MBILINYI *

Women Studies and the Crisis in Africa

THE GLOBAL crisis of the '70s and '80s has had contradictory consequences for women of different nations and classes. Women workers of the third world generally experienced the highest rates of unemployment within the developed industrialised nations as well as the periphery. They found themselves increasingly relegated to 'domestic out work' forms of employment, or were transformed from permanent workers into temporary or casual labourers. An increasing proportion of land has been shifted to the production of marketable crops, including food. Labour, fertilizer, equipment and money has shifted away from the production and processing of food for immediate consumption. Large-scale production schemes (forestry, pastoralist as well as cultivation) have augmented the rapid erosion of the land (Mbilinyi 1985 a, 1985 b, Sen with Grown 1985). Agri-business has profited from the expansion of agriculture production and marketing in Africa through their sales of manufactured products (fertilizer, seeds, pesticides, agriculture equipment), technical services, the marketing and processing of agricultural products. At the same time, the peasants and agricultural labourers have become poorer.

Women peasants are the backbone of peasant agriculture, and have been since the colonial period. The peasant sector as a whole is the foundation of the entire labour system. It provided the only social security system for most employed workers, and reproduces the labour force in all senses. Hence, women peasants are the backbone of the African economy. They have endured untold agony and hardship during this prolonged period of crisis.

Conditions have worsened for most women in Africa, and indeed, in the entire Third World. At the same time, women have begun to receive specific attention from policy-makers and researchers, national and international. Women's bureaux and women's organisations have been created in nearly every African independent nation. One or two women have been appointed Cabinet-level Ministers and others have made it to top positions in the civil service and in professions. For these women, conditions have definitely improved.

Women's studies as a specific body of thought, research and action, has

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developed within this contradictory context. Although influenced by different positions within Western-based feminism, women's studies in Africa has had its own specific history. It has also contributed to the development of the emergent third world women's movement against the exploitation and oppression of third world women and all its peoples.

In Africa today, there continues to be a struggle for the right to pose the "women's question" independent of global and national state apparatuses, and without being subjugated to oppressive male-dominant structures. Section II briefly analyses the development of women's studies and action at the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in order to clarify specific aspects of that struggle. The achievements of that struggle have not been without major shortcomings. These are revealed by the kinds of issues and topics which have predominated much of the research, and the form and practices adopted in the research process. Some of these problems are presented in section III. Popular history provided a powerful means of approaching many issues, and empowering its participants (section IV).

The analysis is concretised through reference to Tanzania and Africa. Nevertheless, its concerns cross national and continental borders. Third world women face the threat of the same dominant global forces. Moreover, women in East Africa share a common history with the women of many Arab and Asian nations tied into the history of the Indian Ocean Trade Complex. A story of slavery and plunder, it is also a story of the expansion of Islam and the creation of a new Swahili civilisation. This common history could provide the basis for unified action and collective analysis.

II

Two aspects of women's struggles at the University of Dar es Salaam are presented here.¹ One is based on the efforts by women academicians to fight against sex discrimination in working conditions of academic women. The nature of 'women's studies' at the University is the other. Women workers have had their own struggles, as have women students. However, neither of these groups have tried and/or succeeded to organise themselves as women or to articulate their concerns as women workers or women students.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the issue of sex discrimination in hiring and promotion policies of the University's administration was raised. A public memorandum was written by one woman academician and circulated to staff and women students with the assistance of supportive undergraduate students. Later, a group of women academicians organised around the same issue. They were reacting to the refusal of senior male academics to hire, a woman graduate who had passed with honours. A memorandum was written, which included data on the hiring practices of the University, and it was signed by all the participants. After a position was finally offered to the graduate concerned, the momentum of the group faded away.

During the mid-70s, women academics began to organise themselves in one group to combat issues of sex discrimination in hiring, promotions, work and living conditions, access to travel and study allowances and so on.

The majority of women academics participated in this informal organisation, Tanzanians and non-Tanzanians alike. Their organisation was threatened and finally stopped through an alliance of university high-level officials, the ruling party authorities and the leadership of the university branch of the official national women's organisation.

A new move emerged in response to the lack of representation of women in the leadership of UDASA, the Academic Staff Assembly. Women created a forum to organise themselves within UDASA, while preparing a report on conditions of women academics at the University (UDASA 1980). An ad-hoc committee was formed which called several meetings of all women academics, and the majority attended from all Faculties. Members of all faculties participated in collecting statistics on the staffing and training position of women. The report was able to document the lack of equal advancement of women at senior levels of academic hierarchy, as well as their lesser opportunity to be hired in the first place. Discrimination in enrolment at under-graduate and post-graduate levels was also shown. The report was adopted by a majority vote at an UDASA general meeting after intense struggle. Another committee was created within the UDASA structure of operations. The character of debate over the report revealed the inability and/or unwillingness of fellow academicians to confront contradictions pertaining either to sex or to seniority. Since the report, the proportion of women students had declined at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

In each of these cases, the women concerned investigated the structure of the university and social relations pertaining to power and control over its resources. They tried to engage in some form of lobbying with colleagues to press forward the issues under consideration. In none of these cases did they consciously and deliberately seek to organise women workers and/or junior ranks among the administration and/or students. This separate focus on academics has been typical of other movements of teachers as well as students, and necessarily limits possible realms of action.

Related to these practical struggles has been the struggle over the right to study and teach about the oppression and liberation of women. Women are a minority in every department, with the possible exception of Botany. They are relegated to the bottom of the academic hierarchy, and are vulnerable to threats pertaining to status and opportunities for further study. The macho behaviour of most men in administration and academics is complicated by the role of sex in teacher-student relations as well as relations among senior and junior staff (academic and administrative) and among workers and administrators/academicians. Commoditisation of sex relations is prevalent, along with assault and different forms of rape. Independent women are attacked by fellow students ("punched" according to student discourse) through pornographic posters ("wall literature").

A formal "women's studies" does not exist at the University of Dar es Salaam, nor at any other African University to my knowledge. During the early days of Development Studies, there was a second year option course pertaining to women. It was taught collectively, and attracted a sizable stu-

dent body consisting both of women and men. The openness of the early 70s was soon eclipsed however, and along with it this course, and the optional format as a whole. Women's studies has never been a popular or a respectable area of study for post-graduate or independent research, its financial value has been realised however by academic authorities, attracted by donors' funding priorities. They have been prone to seek "a woman" or "women" to comply with the demands of the donor package, or to attend a course, etc. The authorities do not recognise a given body of work which is understood to be "women's studies", however. Nor do most people perceive the connection between the developmental history of this branch of work and the oppression of women at the University.

Some women have begun to work collectively in order to counteract these conditions. One example is the Women's Research and Development Project (WRDP), which began as a small group of four women in 1978. Right from its conception, the group has included women hired at the University and others working elsewhere. Two-thirds of its membership or more are Tanzanian citizens. It began as a study group, which concentrated on feminist works from the West. Attention shifted later to writings on women in Africa, on the changing sexual division of labour among third world peasants, on women and socialism. This informal group eventually grew to eleven members, and initiated the Institute of Development Studies Women's Study Group in August, 1980. Its activities broadened to include research and documentation along with study. By 1982 most of its attention was on work produced by members, and by other researchers working in Tanzania who presented their proposals or findings. Membership climbed to 25. The mass media sub-group succeeded in producing two radio series on pregnant school girls and on wife-beating. Each had five programmes in Kiswahili and in English and was part of a drive to broaden the base of debate over the women's question.

Fundamental differences arose with the management of IDS over principles of organisation. At stake was the right of women to control their work, and to have a say in designing research and other activities. Contradictions heightened when efforts were made to hijack the funds and equipment which the group had succeeded in acquiring. In addition to the general question of democracy in organisation was the specific one of an oppressed group being forced to subjugate fundamental policy matters to a male majority. The group left IDS in protest in 1982.

Out of this struggle emerged the Women's Research and Documentation Project (WRDP). WRDP is now a part of the ICAE Women's Programme and affiliated to the African Adult Education Association. The University provides administrative functions when needed. Added to its earlier activities have been the development of a joint history project, the development of a publications programme in Kiswahili and English, increasing research among individual members supported by WRDP, and the running of seminars and workshops on issues pertaining to the question of women's oppression and liberation. Most recently, the group ran a series of three

workshops at the NGO Forum at Nairobi which were very well attended and received. A high level of cooperation and solidarity was achieved among members, nearly all of whom attended the Forum. Moreover, most of the other Tanzanian participants at the Forum also participated in the workshops, and a dialogue arose which cut across organisational barriers.

The struggles of WRDP have succeeded to create more space for women (and men who attend seminars by invitation) to pose questions pertaining to oppression, exploitation and liberation. IDS created a new Women Study Group after WRDP walked out, which has succeeded in attracting more women to engage in women's studies. The nature of the work done in each group, the point of view and world outlooks, all vary, within and between them. One question has remained central to the history of both groups, and that is how to pose the women's question? Is it a national question? A class question? Neither or both?

WRDP members have learned a great deal about practical politics of organisation. They took principled positions on issues pertaining to funding, decision-making, class perspectives, which meant the rejection of some funding possibilities and the postponement of others. They learned that all funding necessitates some compromise. Study, research, documentation and mass dissemination was possible without funding, or with minimal local resources. However, reliance solely on voluntary, unpaid labour has limited what is possible. Members have full-time jobs and many are also wives, and/or mothers, and/or household heads with other family responsibilities. Nevertheless, WRDP has managed to overcome a series of hurdles, to absorb the loss of old members and the entry of new ones lacking the experiences of the past, and to change leadership. Time spent on organising is no longer considered an absolute waste. Members insist that WRDP assets are collective property rather than the private domain of a few leaders. Insistence on the right to organise and to investigate women's oppression and liberation persists.

III

In order to assess "women's studies", it must be related to the whole of social sciences. Social scientists were employed by the colonial state in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa to provide guidance on administrative questions. Their knowledge enhanced the capacity of the colonialists to rule. It can be argued that most social scientists continue to carry out a similar function today in the independent nations (see Mbilinyi, Vuorela et al 1982, Vuorela 1981). Here it is only possible to summarise work done since independence (see Mascarenhas 1979, Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi—MM—1983, Mbilinyi 1984, Vuorela 1981, 1982 for further analysis of colonial and independence periods).

Social science became more diversified, specialised and fragmented after independence. By the early 1970s, American social science became dominant in several departments. "Take-off" theories of modernisation and development held sway in applied subjects like Education as well as in

Economics Underdevelopment theory was adopted, beginning in the late 1960s, as a reaction against "development" ideology, and a suitable ideology to support state socialism. Both underdevelopment theory and socialist proclamations shared the absence of concrete analysis of class formation and class struggles, however, and they were not rooted in political organisations of the people (Mustafa and Bryceson 1982).

The struggles between modernisation and underdevelopment ideologies and dialectical materialism have heightened during the crises of the 70s and 80s. Modernisation ideology was never eclipsed, and has had a revival under the flag of "development first". The "Women in Development" or WID line in women's studies is situated within it. WID also exemplifies "policy-oriented-applied-research" (POAR) which is supportive of state programmes and acts to facilitate policy "success" (see Mbilinyi, Vuorela et al 1982). The whole thrust of "integrating women into the economic and civic life of the country" (eg resolution 15, Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action of the ILO Conference in 1976) is to deepen women's vulnerability to oppression, domination and exploitation. For women are already the most intensely exploited segment of the labour force in Africa, in agriculture as well as manufacturing and services (Dirasse 1981, MM 1983, Mbilinyi 1985a, Obbo 1980). The issue therefore is not one of integrating women more into such exploitative and oppressive relations.

Donor agencies stimulated an upsurge of women-related research and practical projects, beginning in the mid-70s, in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa. Why mid-70s? Of course, it can be pegged to the start of the Women's Decade. But then, why a Women's Decade then, and not earlier? or later? I would argue that women had begun to be perceived as a problem by various national and international state agencies. Their focus has consistently been to find out about, and/or to work with, poor women, especially poor rural women. At the same time, their local contacts and local beneficiaries tend to be middle class women who receive funds for projects, oversee the activities of local groups of poor women (where such exist), and are brought to international meetings to discuss the problems of the poor. Poor women usually means peasants and self-employed women, but those participating in projects are usually the local rural "gentry" and entrepreneurs. Rarely have casual or regular workers been targeted.

At issue is the way women peasants have resisted "development" and "modernisation", along with many self-employed categories of women in the second economy. Various forms of resistance and struggle have occurred over crop choices and markets, over production processes and compliance with official regulations, and over marriage and sexuality. Women are "tired", so they say, of too much work and no benefit—which can lead to deep questioning as to the nature of society and the state as well as the family. The fact that middle class women have also experienced consistent discrimination in education and employment provides possibilities of class alliances that might threaten the world order as well as the nation-state. Their cooptation into international and national programmes allies them with

dominant groups and means that they have personal interests at stake in maintaining the status quo. They also provide leadership for the active elements among the oppressed, which is alternative to those who resist.

A recognisable group (or groups) of "experts on women" has emerged in the early 80s. The majority work in government departments and in foreign national and international agencies. Some work at the University of Dar es Salaam and Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro. Two opposing lines have become discernible in Tanzanian women studies. One line resembles Western bourgeois feminism identified with middle class whites. It calls for equal participation in education, employment and all other spheres of society as an end in itself. Instead of demanding social transformation, it calls for assimilation of women into society as it is today. Hence the aptness of the word "integration". WID positions are situated here. It relates to practical projects as well as research, and especially POAR advocates who challenge researchers to be "relevant" to the needs of the state.

The other emergent line situates women's oppression in the context of class and national exploitation and oppression. It seeks to identify the way imperialist relations struggle to control reproduction and production, and perceives sexism as one of the powerful weapons of the dominant social forces in the country and the world. It has had to recognise and combat the way that WID positions promote contradictions among the people "to orient the people's attention away from the real causes of their miseries" (Wamba 1983:4). At the same time, it has been necessary to constantly stress the impossibility of understanding national, class and global contradictions without posing the question of women's oppression.

This struggle between the two lines has often remained submerged. This may be partly explained by the general hostility of the environment in which all researchers engaged in women-related studies must work. Alliances become necessary (perhaps mistakenly so) in order to survive. However, in recent years open confrontation around the question of these two lines has emerged, primarily at debates in university circles (two recent products of this debate are MM 1983 and Vuorela 1984).

Probably the largest number of research projects concentrate on "rural women" situated in villages. They have succeeded in documenting the oppressive and exploitative nature of the sexual division of labour in production, both for the market and for home consumption. This has been linked to the burdens women have in providing water, fuel and prepared food, and in caring for children. The way in which women are deprived of a fair return for their work at household and village level has been well documented.

Very few studies have sought to relate social relations at household level to wider relations of class and nation. For example, husbands are blamed for booting up cash proceeds from crops rather than challenging the global power relations which sustain low prices for agricultural commodities and an international division of labour that bind women and men to the soil. Neither women nor men receive a fair return for their labour as peasant pro-

ducers Whatever cash earnings accrue from agriculture are mainly spent on food and other basic necessities Moreover, in many areas women booze along with men, to the consternation of middle class observers Alcoholism is becoming a real issue in Tanzania, and probably Africa as a whole The stand taken by the young people of Soweto, to struggle against beer consumption, brings out the conflicting interests at stake We must also heed women's rationale for spending time after working in the fields at the local beer *Klabu* (more or less a local pub, where homebrew alcoholic beverages are sold) The women say, "we want to rest too" "We are tired too"

Most studies have focused on rich and middle peasants and entrepreneurs, and have ignored or underrepresented poor peasants and agricultural labourers This may be why the literature emphasises problems of access to credit, farm inputs and/or other industrial requirements, rather than low wages, and unemployment Intra-household relations may also be more oppressive in richer households compared to the poor In the former, wives are often perceived, and related to, as labourers acquired to increase output and acreage The payment of bridewealth adds to the commoditisation of marriage relations under present circumstances Poor men depend on their wives for basic subsistence and that of the family as a whole, there is little or no "surplus" to accumulate for their personal use

Findings on the sexual division of labour in production and maintenance activities can be related to world prices for crops in world, national and local markets, in order to show the way that peasant labour subsidises the buyers Women bear more than their share of that burden At the same time, men build houses, construct and maintain roads, repair agricultural implements, weave mats and baskets, and in these and other ways contribute to the maintenance of home and family

As villagers become increasingly dependent on markets for basic necessities, including fertilizers, seeds, tools as well as food during certain months of the year, they become increasingly alienated from their work In debt, and subject to government efforts to control the labour process, men have lost or are losing control of production, along with women

The attention given to male dominance in "decision-making" on production matters within the household has distracted our attention from the entire reality Perhaps peasant men are themselves distracted from challenging dominant forces in their efforts to retain some semblance of authority at household and village level It works both ways for women and men, each struggling to assert themselves in "the home" and community while the ground under their feet is being stolen

Rare are the studies which focus on forms of resistance and struggle among peasant women Women have refused to grow state sponsored crops like cotton, for example, because "you can't eat cotton", and men control cash earnings anyway Women have tended to concentrate their energies on food crops, instead Certain cereals like millet and maize become even more valuable after they have been processed into homebrew beer Studies have

shown that beerbrewing provides higher returns than crop production, and that a sizable and growing portion of women's income is so derived (see Nkoma in Mbilinyi ed 1984, MM 1983)

Working class women in towns have been neglected, along with agricultural labourers. This neglect requires explanation, given the fact that a higher rate of women than men have been migrating to towns for the last twenty or more years, and a growing proportion of the wage-employed labour force are women (Mbilinyi 1985b, Shields 1980). One immediate factor is that most research proposals emanating from donor and development agencies target "rural women" and rural women are assumed to be peasants. There is also official pressure to study the problems of the majority, who are depicted as rural peasant women. Why this bias?

I think there may be two aspects to the explanation, which require further investigation in themselves. One is the imagery surrounding the village women who is portrayed as the *authentic* African women and the village as the *authentic* African community. There is a strong parallel to colonial imagery about detribalisation and the authentic spokespersons for "the natives" (see Mbilinyi 1985c). The other aspect is that big business has realised the significance of female labour—and its withdrawal—in the production of the cheap raw materials they depend upon for profits. In line with the growing power of agribusiness in the organisation of peasant production and reproduction, there is emerging perhaps another form of industrial sociology and industrial relations. One of their chief concerns is women agricultural producers.

Appearances in much literature to the contrary, women workers and poor traders sustain the second economy of African towns. As Christine Obbo put it in the sub-title to her book entitled *African Women, Their Struggle for Economic Independence*, "Town Migration is not for Women—this Book is African Women's Reply" (Obbo 1980). A growing proportion of workers in Tanzania are casual labourers, a result of employers' struggles to reduce production costs during the crises of the 70s and 80s. Women represent a growing portion of casual labourers in towns and in areas where commercial and capitalist farming is more developed (Mbilinyi 1985b). Very young female children work as domestic servants in exchange for a place to live, clothing and food. This is the only way many other working women can afford to carry out economic activities or keep a job, in the absence of socialised institutions for child care, food preparation and the like. Young or old, women domestic servants substitute for their labour in the home. This reduces the pressure for change in the sexual division of labour in the home, and social division of labour as a whole. So far there has been no study which focuses on the conditions of work and life of domestic servants, women or men.

Is it more than coincidental that another large group of women who have been overlooked are those who engage in some form of prostitution? The term prostitute has been used in everyday language to refer to women who agree to live with a man temporarily, and provide him with all the basic services of a wife in exchange for subsistence, and in some cases, entertain-

ment and gifts. In other words, such women cook, tote water, mind children, engage in sex with the male partner, etc. It is also used to describe street-walkers and women in brothels. Women secretaries, teachers, nurses, and others who have sex with their "bosses" are similarly described. Prostitution provides employed women with supplementary sources of income on a par with theft and corruption among employed men. The everyday imagery about prostitutes and prostitution does not relate either to the sex discrimination women face in the labour market nor to the reality of sexual harassment in the workplace. Too often women prostitutes are portrayed as Victims. Whereas Bujra (1980) has pointed out that prostitution provides an alternative form of employment which is relatively lucrative.

Ideology about the male dominant-female dependent nuclear family has been used in an effort to legitimise the periodic expulsion of women from the wage labour market and/or towns during times of crisis. The ideology pertaining to the countryside, where villagers supposedly can survive so long as they work hard enough (see Mbilinyi 1985c) helps to rationalise their forcible return "home" to what is described as their tribal homeplace. Both sets of imagery have arisen in the context of consistently lower wages for women than men in all occupations and at different education levels, declining *real* incomes for women and men in nearly all occupations, and rising unemployment in the labour force. Both imageries conflict with the growing rate of urbanisation and the increasing number of female-headed households in villages and towns (Bryceson 1980, MM 1983).

Most studies of sexism in art, the mass media and socialisation of children and youth concentrate on rites, ceremonies and songs preserved from a real or imaginary past (see MM 1983). Powerful examples have been provided of the way male supremacy is so reinforced (See Matteru, 1979). Patricia Mbughuni's current study of oral literature has unearthed an alternative portrayal of powerful, dynamic and/or rebellious women. Reinterpretations of the usual "evil seductress" image of woman suggest models of active and powerful women.²

Entirely new Western concepts of beauty, dress, hair style and body image are being created through the mass media, predicated on imagery of fair skinned, slender, youthful women with European facial characteristics. Women were valued in the past if they were physically strong and able to work hard, and looked and acted strong and powerful—at least, within the "woman's" realm. Today women—most women that is—still do the heavy work their mothers did. There is no reflection of their reality in these pallid, lissome creatures. At stake is more than the profits that transnational companies make from sale of cosmetics, clothes, women's journals and songs. The power of big business to shape women's self-concepts, and those of men, heralds a devastating change in sexual and social relations (see Besha 1979, Lihamba 1981).

One way to counteract the propaganda is to reconstruct women's histories in the context of concrete analysis of different African societies.

Especially needed today is research which focuses on forms of self organisation among the masses during the various periods of social development. What were the roles of women in these organisations and what ideologies emerged to support their actions and leadership (or its opposite)?

IV

Present circumstances call out for popular history. Various sources are available, including archives, oral history, and life histories, as well as a mix of procedures (group discussions, public meetings, drama) and a critical rereading of earlier work. Popular history will do more than produce knowledge. It can retrieve for the popular classes, and for women in particular, their own history of resistance and struggle against oppression and exploitation. It can provide a measuring stick with which to comprehend present forms of colonisation. Probably of greatest significance is its affirmation of the possibility of social change and the basis of that change, in organised collective action.

Why colonial history? Why women's history? Africa is experiencing a new colonial phase. Colonisation is occurring through the agency of an amorphous global state embodied in multilateral and bilateral agencies. These are the very agencies funding women related research. In neo-colonial countries the nation state increasingly behaves like, and is being structured as, Native Administration during the first half of the twentieth century.

The investigation of earlier periods and forms of colonial process and resistance will help to understand and know how to respond to its present phase. The inadequacies of earlier decolonisation struggles are increasingly clear. For example, political independence or what is called "flag independence" did not destroy the grip which big business and the more powerful capitalist nation-states had on the economy. Indeed, the neo-colonial solution to national resistance has led to a stronger military and economic presence than ever before. At the same time, the popular classes have become disenchanted with their national rulers. The crises of the 70s and 80s has impoverished the people and imperilled their lives.

Along with the failure to properly understand the changing nature of colonialism, there has been a corresponding weakness in analysing the changing nature of capitalism and its specificities. The processes whereby the people of neo-colonised nations are proletarianised and/or subjected in other ways to demands of capitalist market forces require urgent analysis and action. At the same time, the pivotal nature of women's oppression in the development of exploitation and oppression by class and nation must be recognised. These are all aspects of a whole, in that women predominate in primary commodity production and trade and in the second economy, and they have sustained the labour reserve economy, the foundation of the reproduction of cheap labour today. The concept of the labour reserve economy is not a geographical term. Studies in Europe and North America have shown the significance of the family in providing a labour reserve and a pool of cheap labour vested in women.

History is political Opposing dominant ideologies with those of the dominated is a necessary form of struggle. Grouping women workers, peasants and allies together to narrate stories of their lives and of their community may be a part of that struggle. The outcome depends on the way the research process is organised. Which class outlook is in command in a practical sense? To what extent do women workers and peasants determine the questions posed, the perspective taken and the conclusions reached? How is the knowledge, so produced presented and to whom? The debate in Africa on Participatory Research (PR) has clarified the political significance of these questions (Kassam and Mustafa 1982, Mustafa ed 1982). The class positions of 'researchers' and 'researched', the sources of funding, and the organisational framework within which the research takes place are fundamental questions.

The need to go beyond boundaries of the research process in order to measure its political impact needs reemphasising however (see Statement of the 1981 Regional Workshop on Research Methodology, IDS at Arusha in Mustafa ed 1982). Third World intellectuals must confront the tendency towards demoralisation, cynicism and/or sterile negativity. This tendency is not characteristic of third world feminists, however—witness the enthusiasm, commitment and power of the workshops organised by third world women at the NGO Forum in Nairobi. At the same time, we must also combat a voluntaristic view of social change and political action. Experiences in participatory research have confirmed the limitations of individual or group actions to "immerse with the people" which take place outside of an organisation. The organisation need not be the bureaucratic state-like form that women have so readily rejected. An organised collective network may provide the format in which one is accountable, receives support and critique. Its membership must include members of the oppressed and exploited classes, its leadership should reflect overall composition. Having such an organisational framework does not in and of itself, resolve the contradictions which exist between middle class women and peasants, workers and other popular classes. However, within its boundaries these contradictions can be worked out. Building an organisation is only a part of a larger process. "The successful raising of political consciousness—i.e., the preparation of subjective factors—is decided at the level of concrete struggles, and it can only be seen who is against transformation at the level of these concrete struggles." (Statement, Arusha Workshop 1981 in Mustafa ed 1982). Class, national and sex contradictions can only be resolved only in the process of organised collective resistance and struggle. The outcome of contradictions within the research process, and the knowledge produced, depend on positions taken in these wider struggles of which we are a part.

At the same time, these wider struggles are products of human consciousness, and vice versa. When women in Africa create a new history, they must combat all of the other histories based on domination by class, nation and sex. History is the site of class struggles. *History is political*.

¹This section and portion of the following sections were presented as part of a

paper ("Participatory Research in the Context of the Global State") to the African Participatory Research Network's second general conference in Arusha, June 30-July 9, 1985

²Many of these points on women in the arts have been discussed collectively in Women's Research and Documentation project (WRDP) sessions, including those of its IDSWG days

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UDM	University of Dar es Salaam
WRDP	Women's Research and Development Project, University of Dar es Salaam

SHEILA ALLEN*

The Labour Process and Working at Home

BRITISH society in the 1980s urgently needs the development of theory adequate to the problems which are being experienced by many sections of the population. The structuring and meaning of unemployment, the increase in poverty— through low-waged sectors and the development of a system of social *insecurity*, the myth of the small firm or individual enterprise as a solution to the crises of monopoly capitalism.

Weber's influence on industrial sociology remains dominant, but the past two decades have seen a revival of ideas presented in the work of other theorists, in some circles Marx is the front-runner, in others Durkheim, with the largely unattributed ideas of Simmel scattered throughout work ranging from marxist to functionalist. The sociology of industry and of industrial societies in its present state owes a great debt to them. One reason for this revival is that these thinkers addressed themselves to critical social questions and ways of analysing them in order to understand the forces of change in society.

Theory can, by analysing causes and making visible consequences, underpin programmes or policies which aim to reduce suffering and hardship and more positively create the possibility of an alternative, more equitable, ordering of social relations. The development of theory can be a very practical activity rather than a rather self-indulgent picking over of concepts without reference to the realities of social relations they are intended to order and explain.

The introduction of data into a discussion of theory creates difficulties which are not easily or smoothly overcome and a retreat into the bland packaging of concepts has immense academic attractions. My present research, a project on homeworking, raises in acute form the inadequacies and flaws in the theories which currently enjoy a high degree of credibility as explanations of the social relations of work in capitalist societies.

Much of the theory renders itself irrelevant by adopting assumptions which exclude the possibility of explaining the work and working lives of large sections of the population. The list of those not incorporated into the

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assumptions is now familiar. That women head this list is now perhaps accepted at a high level of generality. It is much less obvious in its impact in the actual work produced. Familiarity does not make the inadequacies less relevant nor can it be allowed to cut off the important discussion of developing assumptions more closely related to the working lives of both men and women.

Employment and Work

The centrality of the wage relation in industrialised societies has dominated relations not only within industry but within the family, household, education system, and pervades the politics of public and personal life. It is the core element in the creation of classes and in the accumulation of capital. It is not only a material fact, but underlies the ideological constructions of relations in employment, the family and household.

It is not possible to understand or explain any actual labour process in our society without recognising this. But people do not arrive and engage in this process mysteriously grown and knocked into shape. They are produced and reproduced physically and culturally within definite social formations.

The equating of work with employment and nothing else which underlies so much industrial sociology is not surprising. As soon as one moves away from this conceptualisation that employment equals work, the question of drawing meaningful and useful boundaries arises. Since the late 1960s a large and growing literature has attempted to erode and alter the terms in which social science draws these boundaries. Much of this arose from the challenge of the women's movement which raised again the questions of gender relations and the sexual division of labour. To understand these, employment is only partially useful as an organising concept and can, unless carefully handled, lead to gross distortions of the experience of women as social actors. A range of activities falling outside the employer-employee relationship are a necessary part of analyses which aim to encompass this experience.

If we assume that any activity, within a capitalist society, which has a price in the market, is work, we begin to develop such an analysis. A whole range of tasks which are normally unwaged, if they are performed by wives, mothers or other female kin, can be, and are, bought if performed by others. They have a price in the market. If we view it over time, we can also see that many activities now falling in the unwaged category once constituted significant areas of waged work, domestic service being an obvious case.

It is not the nature of the task or activity which defines whether it is paid or unpaid, it is the social relationships which do so. The care and material support of children is central to these relationships, but so is the care and support of the sick, the elderly and the handicapped and the male employed population. This care can constitute unpaid work or waged work. Who performs it, under what conditions and what factors structure it as unpaid labour, income-generating labour, or waged labour, are some of the basic

questions in understanding the social divisions of labour and the labour process. These questions cannot be confined within an analysis of the family or household, nor can they be understood within a restricted relations of production model. Neither production nor reproduction models, however sophisticated, can address the questions which relate to the relations *between* these spheres of activity. Since both women *and* men work *and* participate in households, the prime focus of enquiry at a micro and macro level should be the modes of integration between these.

The Separation of Home and Work

A further theoretical and empirical treatment of these questions would help to clarify the generally accepted notion of the separation of home and work. A reformulated concept of work would facilitate the separation of the ideology in such phrases as 'when man is at home, he is not working, when he is working he is not at home' from the actual structuring of the working lives of men and women. Such a phrase has never been applicable to women nor, I would suggest, should it be treated as unproblematic in the case of men.

To say that increasingly to earn one's livelihood meant going out of the household unit is one thing, but we cannot assume that this applied right across the board. Nor can we assume that the household ceased to be a *workplace* with the replacement of domestic industry by factory activity in some manufacturing industry. Analytically, the separation of the workplace from the site of the household is not necessarily co-terminous with capitalist relations of production. Historically, it can be argued that this has been the dominant trend in the development of capitalism. But coalmining and ship-building, for obvious reasons, were never household activities whatever relations of production existed. Agriculture has always been more problematic, the development of capitalist relations of production in agriculture existed from early days when day-labourers (particularly landless ones) hired themselves out, but the position of those who hired themselves out for a year and became in some way part of the household of the farmer, a system existing until very recently, do not fall easily into the home and work separation. Where are the analytical boundaries to be drawn most usefully?

The mid 20th century conceptions of home, dominated by ideological constructions of domesticity and maternity (for women) and leisure and servicing (for men) cannot be assumed to be analytically useful for understanding work or the relations of production. Empirically the conception is questionable, and therefore it must be questionable theoretically.

The official records such as census data, reflect a changing categorisation of work/economic activity and can not be taken as a description of the actuality of household arrangements. We should use such data with extreme care in our attempts to understand the relations between households and the external economy and the economic relations within households.

Marx argued that the domestic system of production would disappear in the logic of capitalist production. Bythell, writing in the late 1970s, saw its disappearance at the beginning of this century as due to the inequities of the sys-

tem and because it had become uneconomic (1978). Currently, some social scientists see the domestic system as part of the informal sector, providing an alternative to the problem of increasing, permanent unemployment.

In the 1970s the domestic system now called homeworking was re-discovered in some circles on the fringes of academia and by small groups working in the political or feminist field. I think there is evidence to show it never died out. What its extent is, what the economics of it are, who uses it, under what conditions, are largely unknown and untheorised. But the existence of waged work in the household challenges many of the assumptions about the separation of home and work and the sociology of production relations.

Waged Work in the Home

The case of homeworking is interesting in itself. It is a neglected area, rendered largely invisible by the forms of its organisation, the non-implementation of legislation on registration, the dominant assumptions about work used in sociology and the powerlessness of those who do it. The evidence which exists points to certain common features, low pay, lack of normal employee rights, hidden costs borne by the homeworker, and frequent health and financial problems. The descriptive material has so far not been incorporated into any theoretical model. An adequate theoretical treatment will have to address the complex relationships between the organisation of production, the labour market, the conditions and ideological relationships of households, including the structuring of family life, and the factors affecting the distribution of paid and unpaid work.

An analysis of homeworking has therefore wide theoretical implications. Following Braverman, there was an euphoria about the labour process, the transformation of labour power into commodities with exchange value (1974). This labour power is a specific sort, sold on the market for a price and used outside the home. Andrew Friedman has argued that it does not make sense to view this labour process mechanistically. Sellers of labour power (workers) are active agents who can and do display resistance and the specific economic and social conditions within which any particular labour process is embedded needs to be scrutinised if we are to understand it (1977).

The on-going debate about household (domestic) labour and its relation to capitalism is one area which should be integrated into the study of the labour process. While views differ on what the relationship is, does household (domestic) labour contribute or not contribute to surplus value, what is its relationship to the wage, are two aspects of this debate, there is a growing recognition of the significance of household (domestic) labour to the production and reproduction of daily life, including the production and reproduction of wage-earners and capitalists. I would suggest that an understanding of homeworking will help to clarify some of the issues involved. Homeworking is not household labour, it is waged work. The pattern of the extraction of surplus value in commodity production outside the

home and the preparation and servicing for it within the home have so far been treated as though they were essentially different. I would argue that while there are differences, these have not by any means been clearly stated or explained. Homework, as currently defined, does not involve all waged or income-generating activities carried out within the home. Child-minding, for instance, has been excluded by all but one of the studies in the past decade because it is argued that the relationship between the childminder and the parent differs markedly from that between the producers of commodities and her employer. Where the home is the property of, or managed by, the employer, breweries and publicans, or resident domestic workers are examples, these workers have been excluded, as have writers, artists and musicians. These exclusions have been based on a pragmatic decision relating to proposed legislative reforms and it may well be that they should be reconsidered in terms of theoretical implications.

Homeworkers are almost invariably piece-workers and women. Most homeworking that has been made visible by research would be classed as manual work, though it is known that non-manual/white collar work exists. There is some dispute about the relative volume of the different categories and in a recent study a sample 'to represent the known heterogeneity of this work force' was selected on a 50 per cent "white collar" 50 per cent "blue collar" basis (Cragg and Dawsom 1981). Without further research this dispute about the volume in each category cannot be settled.

Using some of the evidence collected in our recent survey of homeworking in the West Yorkshire region, I shall in the rest of my paper discuss the relations of production in which the homeworking we uncovered is carried out, paying particular attention to the organisation of production and the control of the homeworker.

The Organisation of Production

The picture of the typical employer of homeworkers as a small, local person struggling in a highly competitive market and forced to cut costs to a minimum is only a very partial account of the actual relations of production and the chain of sub-contracting involved in it. There are two types of organisation of production relations which use the homeworking system. One is where established large scale enterprises use a system of sub-contractors with the homeworker as the last link in the chain. The other is a small-scale (often initially part-time) trader who sells the product directly on the market and who may recruit his or her homeworkers personally or sub-contract this function to a kinsman/woman.

The potential for a transition from the second type into manufacturing and wholesaling and retailing on a national or international level exists, perhaps more as a romantic version of business success than as a reality. Little is recorded in any systematic way and a few examples, drawn largely from the past, tend to substitute for an analysis of the conditions under which the transition takes place.

The small, local employer is more properly viewed as a sub-contractor, part of a sub-division of the process of production which links the homemaker into a highly organised system of production. In some cases, extensive arrangements of sub-contracting are interposed between the homeworkers and the firm which sells the commodity on the market. How far the seller of the commodity knows about the labour process involved, how they operate the costing of such labour, and what part these costs play in the pricing of the product, so far remains largely unknown.

The continued use of an unprotected, fragmented labour force provides a degree of flexibility without incurring the costs that would be involved with other forms of labour. Seasonal work, rush orders, rapid changes in the product items, processes involving hand work, are among the features of homeworking. Much that is usually attributed to the characteristics or circumstances of the homemaker may be rather explained by the demands for flexibility in the production process. The irregularity of work is, for instance, attributable not to the level of the homemaker's motivation or the demands of her domestic responsibilities, but to the irregularity of the work supplied. Extra labour capacity can be called upon, without notice or regard to circumstances, to meet orders. Neither the homemaker nor the local sub-contractor exert control over this. This flexibility is acquired with no cost to the capitalist. There is no overtime pay, for evening or weekend work, no redundancy pay or basic wage rate when work is slack, no holidays to be observed so that deadlines can be met.

In our research, over 70 firms were identified as suppliers of homework. A third of these were in the Clothing and Footwear industries, a traditional supplier of homework, but the remaining two-thirds covered eight industrial groupings—Food, Drink and Tobacco, Chemical and Allied Industries, Textiles, Paper, Printing and Publishing, Other Manufacturing, Distributive Trades, Insurance, Banking and Finance and Professional and Scientific Services. These industrial groupings employ over half the total work force of the area in the formal labour market.

Some of our 70 firms were established in the locality, but were national or international manufacturing organisations and not in this sense local firms. Others undertook contract work for large-scale national enterprises which are household names. Only a small minority were local, small employers selling directly onto the market. There is no indication from our evidence that either the rates of pay or the conditions of work vary with the size of the organisation involved. For instance, clothing machinists working for small market outlets and those working for firms supplying national companies received the same low rate of pay. In at least one case, the national company's rate was lower than that paid by a small firm. Those trades covered by Wages Councils do not necessarily pay their homeworkers the agreed legal minimum. Over two-thirds of our homeworkers covered in this way were paid below the minimum rate.

The calculation of the profitability, or the rate of the extraction of surplus value, involved in the use of homeworking labour cannot be precise. A

comparison, however, of the rates paid with the price of the product marketed, even allowing for the cost of materials, advertising and delivery, indicate a very high level of exploitation. To take only one example, an up-market product sold directly to the consumer for £ 18, involved £ 7 45 p for materials and all other costs, except labour of the homemaker, who was paid 75 p

Control of the Homemaker and the Myth of Autonomy

One of the advantages of homemaking is thought to be the autonomy the homemaker exercises in deciding when and for how long she will work and at what pace. The time and effort control exercised over the assembly line worker and all those who clock in and out of work is contrasted with a person working in her own home, with no supervisor or timekeeper.

In the abstract, such a contrast appears to give the homemaker a freedom and flexibility denied to the factory or office worker. From our evidence, collected from 90 homemakers doing a variety of jobs, this picture is quite misleading.

The homemaker is invariably a piece-worker, paid according to the amount she produces. The supply of work is determined by her employer. She may be required to do a certain amount in a specified time,

“He (the employer) will provide £ 20 of work weekly

If you drop below this he will take the machine away”

Or the work may be given on a daily basis, with the amount varying from day to day. Several women received work at 10 a.m. which had to be completed by the following morning at 10 a.m. regardless of the amount.

Others had work supplied very irregularly. They could have as many as three deliveries and collections on one day and nothing on others, work could be brought on Fridays for collection on Mondays, or Christmas Eve for collection immediately after Christmas. There was no control over the pattern, and to keep the work the women felt they must comply with the demands made on them. One woman described her life as,

“You are a prisoner in your own home, you can't go out for a walk or even wash your hair. They come any time. And if you are not in they give the work to someone else”

Half of our homemakers experienced having more work required of them than they could comfortably manage. On the other hand, they were frequently without work. Gaps of several days or weeks were common, and the employers were under no obligation to supply regular work. The loss of income by the women was in no way compensated by the employers.

The pace of work and the time when it was done are controlled in a different way from in-workers, but are not within the control of the individual homemaker.

The actual working pattern varied according to whether children, or an elderly or sick person, were at home during the day, the working hours of the

husband, whether the woman had other waged work outside the home, and whether or not she used the labour of her family and friends. Her autonomy or choice was restricted to how she reconciled her waged homework with all the other demands on her time and energy. Her choice frequently involves working unsocial hours, getting help from her family, and always turning her home into a workplace, with all its attendant inconvenience and hazards. The hidden costs and hidden labour have to be taken into account when assessing the labour process involved in homeworking.

Conclusion

Homeworking is not an inefficient, outdated mode of domestic production, it rather illustrates and highlights some of the advantages to capitalist production provided by a highly fragmented labour force, ideologically constructed as not a labour force by both the labour movement and employers' organisations. This construction is facilitated by the familial and domestic ideologies underlying the sexual division of labour, and the work of women in the household as non-work.

From the evidence above, I conclude that homeworking is an integral part of capitalist production in terms of organisation and control, and not part of petty commodity production, the relations between the buyers and sellers of homeworking labour are capitalist relations differing from non-homeworking relations in the degree of exploitation which is facilitated by the domestic ideology which subordinates women within the household and the labour market, and by the lack of penetration of any of the legal measures to establish and protect the rights of workers. The questions that remain unanswered are to what extent it is an important underpinning of capitalist industrial production because of its flexibility and because of the profit levels unattainable in the formal visible economy, how the conceptualisation of the labour process can be made less restrictive to encompass this intricate and efficient system of exploitation, how the methodology of social science research can be developed so that it no longer colludes in making invisible these and other forms of exploitation and subordination.

Such questions relate directly to the questions of worker organisation. Both in terms of the homeworkers themselves and their claims to employee status to establish the rights and protection afforded to in-workers, and in terms of the threat this form of production continues to present to in-workers, whenever cost-cutting can be achieved by the use of unprotected labour.

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the collection and analysis of the data. While the particular views expressed are my responsibility, I have drawn heavily on my discussions with Julia in preparing this paper and wish to record my debt to her contribution.

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Women and the Industrial Reserve Army—A Reappraisal

THE ROLE of the industrial reserve army for capitalist accumulation under the capitalist mode of production is by now well known.¹ In this note we shall examine the role of women in the industrial reserve army in the context of a labour surplus² multistructural system³ with a variety of production forms differentiated on the basis of the extent of capitalist development. It is clear that such an examination implies that we emphasise the secular role of the 'industrial reserve army'. Most studies of women's role in the industrial reserve army concern only the cyclical aspect.⁴ An understanding of the secular role of women in the industrial reserve army is essentially an understanding of the process of female proletarianisation.

Marx and Engel's vision The following passages from the writings of Marx and Engels provide us a glimpse of their ideas on female proletarianisation.

In *The condition of the working class in England*, Engels noted, "this report testifies to the gradual but sure introduction of the factory system into all branches of industry, recognisable especially by the employment of women and children. In all directions machinery is being introduced and the last trace of the working-man's independence thus destroyed. In all directions the family is being dissolved by the labour of wife and children, or inverted by the husband's being thrown out of employment and made dependent upon them for bread, everywhere inevitable machinery bestows upon the great capitalist command of the workers with it" (pg 497).

Marx noted in *Capital* volume 1 that, "In so far as Machinery dispenses with muscular power, it becomes a means of employing labourers of slight muscular strength, and those whose bodily development is incomplete but whose limbs are all the more supple. The labour of women and children, was, therefore, the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery. That might substitute for labour and labourers was forthwith changed into a means for increasing the number of wage-labourers by enrolling, under the direct sway of capital, every member of the workman's family, without distinction of age or sex." "Machinery by throwing every member of that family on to the labour market spreads the value of the man's labour power

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over his own family. It thus depreciates his labour power. To purchase the labour-power of a family of four workers may, perhaps, cost more than it formerly did to purchase the labour power of the head of the family but in return, four days' labour takes the place of one, and their price falls in proportion to the excess of the surplus-labour of four over the surplus labour of one. In order that the family may live, four people must now, not only labour but expand surplus labour for the capitalist. Thus we see, that machinery, while augmenting the human material that forms the principal object of capital's exploiting power, at the same time raises the degree of exploitation" (pgs 372 & 373)

Elsewhere in the same volume he noted that "by the excessive addition of women and children to the ranks of the workers, machinery at last breaks down the resistance which the male operatives in the manufacturing period continued to oppose to the despotism of capital" (pg 379)

Marx's and Engel's views of the influence of machinery on different classes of society were far more perceptive than those of Ricardo who recognised that machinery affected the interests of different classes in society differently. For instance Engels in *The condition of the working class in England* (p 431) noted

"The bourgeoisie usually replies that improvements in machinery by decreasing the cost of production supply finished goods at lower prices, and that these reduced prices cause such an increase in consumption that the unemployed operatives soon find full employment in newly founded factories. The bourgeoisie ignores the fact that it takes years for these results of the decrease in price to follow and for new factories to be built, it is silent upon the point that every improvement in machinery throws the real work, the expenditure of force more and more upon the machine and so transforms the work of full-grown men into mere expansion which a feeble woman or even a child can do quite as well, and does for half or two-third wages, that therefore grown men are constantly more and more supplanted and not reemployed by the increase in manufacture, it conceals the fact that whole branches of industry fall away or are so changed that they must be learned afresh. It does not mention the fact that the process of improvement goes steadily on, and that as soon as the operative has succeeded in making himself at home in a new branch, if he actually does succeed in doing so, this too is taken from him, and with it the last remnant of security which remained to him for winning his bread"

"The fact that improved machinery reduces wages has also been violently disputed by the bourgeoisie as it is constantly reiterated by the workingmen. The bourgeoisie insists that although the price of piece work has been reduced, yet the total of wages for the week's work has rather risen than fallen, and the condition of the operative rather improved than deteriorated. It is hard to get to the bottom of the matter, for the operatives usually dwell upon the price of piece-work. But it is certain that the weekly wage also has in many branches of work been reduced by the improvement of machinery"

"The worst situation is that of those workers who have to compete

against a machine that is making its way. The price of the goods which they produce adapts itself to the price of the kindred product of the machine and as the latter works more cheaply, its human competitor has but the lowest wages. The same thing happens to every operative employed upon an old machine in competition with later improvements."

"Let us examine somewhat more closely the fact that machinery more and more supersedes the work of men. The human labour involved in both spinning and weaving, consists chiefly in piecing broken threads, as the machine does all the rest. This work requires no muscular strength, but only flexibility of finger. Men are therefore not only not needed for it, but actually by reason, of the great muscular development of the hand, less fit for it than women and children and are therefore naturally almost superseded by them. Hence the more the use of arms, the expenditure of strength can be transferred to steam or waterpower, the fewer men need be employed, and as women and children work more cheaply, and in these branches better than men, they take their places" (p. 434)

"The employment of women at once breaks up the family, for when the wife spends twelve or thirteen hours every day in the mill, and the husband works the same length of time there or elsewhere, what becomes of children?" (p. 436)

"In many cases the family is not wholly dissolved by the employment of the wife but turned upside down. The wife supports the family, the husband sits at home, tends the children, sweeps the room and cooks. This case happens very frequently, in Manchester alone, many hundred such men could be cited, condemned to domestic occupations. It is easy to imagine the wrath aroused among the working men by this reversal of relations within the family, while the other social conditions remain unchanged" (pg. 438)

"Can anyone imagine a more insane state of things than that described in this letter? And yet this condition which unsexes the man and takes from the women all womanliness, without being able to bestow upon the man true womanliness, or the women true manliness—this condition which degrades, in the most shameful way, both sexes, and through them, Humanity, is the last result of our much-praised civilisation the final achievement of all the efforts and struggles of hundreds of generations to improve their own situation and that of their posterity. We must either despair of mankind, and its aims and efforts, when we see all our labour and toil result in such a mockery, or we must admit that human society has hitherto sought salvation in a false direction, we must admit that so total a reversal of the position of the sexes can have come to pass only **because** the sexes have been placed in a false position from the beginning. If the reign of the wife over the husband, as inevitably brought about by the factory system, is inhuman, the pristine rule of the husband over the wife must have been inhuman too. If the wife cannot have her supremacy upon the fact that she supplies the greater part, nay the whole of the common possession* is no true and rational one, since one member of the family boasts offensively of contributing the greater share. If the family of our present society is being thus dissolved, this dissolution

merely shows that at bottom, the binding tie of this family was not family affection, but private interest lurking under the cloak of a pretended community of possessions" (pg 439)

The above passages contain the gist of Marx's and Engels' views on female proletarianisation. The three forms of relative surplus population or the industrial reserve army, are the floating, the latent and the stagnant, the industrial reserve, which by exerting a downward pull on wage level, is one of the counteracting influences on the falling rate of profit in the Marxian scheme of capital accumulation. While, as mentioned before, the cyclical role of the industrial reserve army is well understood, an examination of the forms of relative surplus population indicates that Marx envisaged a secular aspect as well.

For instance, the floating reserve includes workers who are regularly discharged after a certain age (youth) from automatic factories where machinery enters as a factor or where only modern division of labour is carried out, and that section of the working class in modern industry where the life expectancy being short calls for a rapid renewal of the generations of labourers. This floating reserve within the capitalist sector is a secular feature and independent of the booms and depressions of that capitalist sector.

The category of latent relative surplus population refers to the labouring population seeking employment in the capitalist sector consequent to the penetration of capitalism in the precapitalist sectors. While Marx only specifically refers to the agricultural sector, it appears to us to be valid for all precapitalist sectors.

The third category of the relative surplus population, the stagnant, forms a part of the active labour army but with extremely irregular employment. The chief form under which it occurs is domestic industry. It recruits itself constantly from the super numerary forces of the modern sectors of industry and agriculture and specially from those decaying branches of industry where handicraft is yielding to manufacture, manufacture to machinery.

The last sediment of the relative surplus-population dwells in the sphere of pauperism. This layer of society, according to Marx, consists of three categories—those able to work, orphan and pauper children and thirdly those demoralised and ragged and those unable to work.

Marx further noted that "the greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and therefore, also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army."

Summing up the issues so far, the following ideas and views of female proletarianisation emerge from the works of Marx and Engels.

- 1) Factory production and introduction of machinery draws women into production
- 2) And in so doing, substitutes female labour for male labour

- 3) This substitution has repercussions on the family
- 4) Machinery provides the capitalist greater control over the labour process
- 5) The initial resistance to machinery by male labour is broken down by substituting it with female labour
- 6) Machinery by drawing all members of the family irrespective of age and sex, depreciates the value of male labour power
- 7) Machinery by transferring the expenditure of more and more motive power to the machine transforms the work itself bringing about changes both in labour used as well as wages. This transformation of work where the tools have been converted from being manual implements of man into implements of a mechanical apparatus enables the 'motive mechanism' to acquire an independent form entirely emancipated from the restraints of human strength. This, enables employment of labourers with "slight muscular strength and those whose bodily development is incomplete but whose limbs are all the more supple". Consequently the labour of women and children was the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery

Along with the tool, the skill of the workman in handling it passes over to the machine. The capabilities of the tool are emancipated from the restraints that are inseparable from human labour power. In the process, the division of labour gets altered. In place of the hierarchy of specialised workmen that characterises manufacture, there exists in the automatic factory a tendency to equalise and reduce to one and the same level every kind of work that has to be done by the minders of the machines, in the place of the artificially produced differentiations of the detail workmen, step the natural difference of age and sex. This transformation of the work and the worker is generally referred to as "deskilling"

- 8) An examination of the process of proletarianisation cannot be conducted independent of an understanding of the secular aspects of the industrial reserve army
- 9) While Marx's analysis of the forms of relative surplus population does not differentiate between any groups of labour, the following questions with regard to female proletarianisation remain valid
 - a) Within the floating reserve in the capitalist sector where machinery exists and modern division of labour prevails, what is the incidence of women? What are the sectors in which young women get constantly replaced after attaining a certain age and why? Is such replacement of workers after youth more among women than men and more in the female intensive sectors than others?
 - b) In the latent reserve, does the rate of absorption of precapitalist sectors by capitalism differ between female-intensive and other precapitalist sectors of production? While households (as different from

household production) are not viewed as production sectors, they do constitute a latent source of labour supply. What has been the impact of capitalism in augmenting labour supply and why does this process occur?

- c) On the stagnant form of relative surplus population does capitalist domestic industry continue to remain resilient to transformation to modern factory system and if so are these female intensive? Why does this happen?
- d) We further need to note to what extent a sex-segregated employment structure inhibits female absorption in the labour force. It is generally understood that a sex-segregated employment has no basis in laws of motion of capitalism which predict that as women are taken up they are converted in representative proportions into primary workers such that even if they were initially disproportionately represented in cyclical unemployment, a secular homogenization of labour begins to dominate their cyclical differentiation. Does capitalism, even if it destroyed the former precapitalist sex-segregated employment structure, give rise to new forms of sex-segregated employment structures. and why?

Any understanding of the process of female proletarianisation has to contend with these questions on the industrial reserve army as well as the substitutability effect and its implications mentioned in points 1-7

We agree, as would all those following the method of Marx, that none of these questions can be answered a priori without examining the historical development and the dynamics of a particular social formation

A Review of Issues in Some Recent Literature

Studies on the labour process in recent times have largely been initiated by the work of Harry Braverman.⁷ Without negating the major criticism of Braverman's work, namely the fact that the analysis of the labour process is done independently of the analysis of class relations and state institutions, or in other words from the organisation of the mode of production as a whole, we recognise that there are significant insights from Braverman and others on the implications of the restructuring of capitalist labour processes. For Braverman the crucial determinant of changes in the industrial reserve army is mechanisation and automation. "Those industries and labour processes subjected to mechanisation release masses of labour for exploitation in other generally less mechanised areas of capital accumulation." Conversely, in those industries in which mechanisation and automation have not developed in any significant scale there is an increasing demand for labour. This in turn creates the tendency for capital to invest in methods of organisation of the labour process which utilise low wage labour. Braverman thus ties fluctuations in the demand for labour to his analysis of the expanding and declining sectors of the economy. What however has not been tackled in Braverman's analysis is the implications on gender division of labour consequent of the restructuring of the labour process. It is also not clear why cer-

tain categories of labour are low wage labour. If it is a question of skill differences/requirements, this raises the whole question of the concept of 'skill'. Skill can be conceptualized in three different ways. It can refer to complex competencies, involving both conception and execution of a task, which are developed within a particular set of social relations of production, it can refer to control over the labour process, and third the concept of skill can refer to conventional definitions of occupational status. Does the use of 'low wage' labour in certain forms of production organisation imply that the labour process here is simplified? Or the particular labour has a marginal position in the labour process or low occupational status?

In certain forms of production organisation particular types of labour—women, children, and migrants are sought after as low wage labour, compared to other labour which could also be utilised. In the case of footloose and temporary migrants with holds in precapitalist sectors, find those precapitalist sectors to provide a subsidy for their low wage in the capitalist sectors.⁸ In the case of women we find the explanation of low wage for women inadequate in Marx and Engels, and Braveman. It is my position that women as a 'low wage' category cannot be explained without introducing 'patriarchy' in the analysis, by which we mean the ideology of gender relations prevailing in society where man is deemed to be the provider and protector of the family, the concrete manifestation of this ideology being reflected in terms of control over resources and labour among others. The value of female labour power gets discounted thereby. This particular gender ideology not only ensures a discounted rate on female labour power but also reproduces forms of dependence and subordination found within the family in the capitalist work environment. We merely conclude by noting that both in Marx and Braveman, the concept of the industrial reserve army is imprecisely specified both theoretically and empirically.

Marxist Feminist literature on female proletarianisation raise some of the following issues —

The existence of patriarchy within capitalist society is not merely a hangover from a pre-industrial stage of capitalism or from pre-capitalist society nor even of sexist attitudes and prejudices which can be purged but is of fundamental economic, political and ideological importance to the capitalist mode of production.⁹ In this context it was noted that while Marx's analysis of the general tendencies within capitalism provided a foundation for the analysis of female wage labour, it does not adequately analyse the relationship between the family and the organisation of capitalist production. The crucial way in which Veronica Beechey (1977) sees the relationship between the two emerging is through the contradictory tendencies within capitalism to which women are subjected. On the one hand the tendency to draw married women into wage labour under the direct domination of capital which has also given rise to the tendency for capital to produce more labour-saving devices for use in the house, and to produce some of the use values which were previously produced in the home within the system of

capitalist commodity production. This tendency coexists with another tendency towards the maintenance of the family as a unit for the reproduction of labour power and of the woman's role as domestic labourer within it, and attempts to lower the value of male labour power by producing use-values which are necessary for the production and reproduction of labour power as a commodity both on a day to day and a generational basis. These contradictory tendencies, she notes, have been embodied in a number of ways of organising the labour process such as the creation of flexible shifts, part time work etc., which have enabled women to perform both forms of labour, domestic labour and wage labour. It is her view, that whether the woman labours as domestic labourer outside the direct domination of capital, or as wage labourer under the direct domination of capital, the woman is vitally involved in capital's attempts to extract a high rate of surplus value, and to generate countertendencies to the tendency for the rate of profit to fall.

It was pointed out that Marx as well as Braveman do not recognise the reaction of the organised working class to changes or restructuring of the labour process, and the implication of it for gender division of labour in a patriarchal capitalist context. In other words, there are limits to the substitutability of one type of labour for another mentioned in the earlier section, limits drawn by political action, rather than the economic mechanisms.

Veronica Beechey (1977) argues that the specific position of women as part of the industrial reserve army can be explained in terms of (a) their labour power being paid for at a price below its value (b) their labour power having a lower value and (c) the existence of the family, and of women's dependency within the family, and the ideological assumptions which surround this, which enter into the determination of the value of female labour power. However, she restricts the use of the industrial reserve army concept to "short, sharp shifts" in labour demand, in response to seasonal fluctuations or fluctuations in the business cycle. Long term shifts in the structure of the working class and the introduction of female labour on a fairly long term basis into particular branches of industry can more usefully be seen in terms of capital's attempts to employ forms of labour power which have a lower value and in terms of the process of deskilling. If we recognise the secular aspect of the industrial reserve army, then Beechey's distinction between the two is essentially a distinction of the cyclical and the secular role of the industrial reserve army. Once again we will have to recognise that much of this confusion exists simply because the concept is imprecisely specified both theoretically and empirically. Beechey is of the opinion that whenever women have a different value from that of male labour power, their distinctive position within production has to be understood by reference to the family and the role of women within it. We do not restrict it so narrowly, but say that it has to be understood in terms of the patriarchal ideology as mentioned earlier.

Floya Anthias (1980) while agreeing with Beechey that the family/

production nexus is crucial, warns that it would be a mistake to take the family as 'presupposed' for it is inextricably bound, affecting and affected, by the production process, although it is one of the conditions of existence of women's wage labour in capitalism. It is also her view that once family is introduced, the analysis should be conducted at the level of the 'social formation' and not 'the mode of production' as Beechey attempts to

Anthias also thinks that Beechey's 'advantages' to capital of female labour is different from the question concerning the reasons for women being drawn into production. She thinks the issue is the reason, why particular groups of human subjects, with certain characteristics, whether sex or race, fill particular places in society and specifically in the labour process. Given this problematic, what is actually necessary in her opinion is a concrete analysis of the process by which 'women' have been drawn into employment and into various categories of employment.

Anthias also highlights some of the weaknesses in Beechey's argument of how female labour is advantageous to capital in three ways, in particular Beechey's argument that women can be paid less than the value of labour power, and her analogy of women with semiproletarianised workers. While semi-proletarianised workers depend on another mode of production, in the case of women, according to Beechey, dependence is on the male wage. Anthias finds a circularity in Beechey's argument, that women have got to be initially excluded from production within the capitalist mode in order to be constituted as economic dependents.

Anthias also points out that Marx's analysis of Reserve army was at a general and abstract level and do not refer to any particular group of people. She also finds the political implications of applying the concept of RAL to women unfortunate for it leads to a tendency to marginalize the importance of women's employment for advanced capitalism. Also Beechey's emphasis on dependence of women on male wage might lead to a strategy of 'payment for housework' (though Beechey herself has not said so) and the underestimation of the need for struggles along various other fronts particularly on the ideological front.

While agreeing with Anthias on the issues raised, particularly the political ones, I do not think Beechey ever has a narrow conception of struggles. The struggles at the ideological front are both against capitalism and patriarchy. Marilyn Power (1983) agrees with Floya Anthias (1980) that Marx's categories of the reserve army were general and not intended to describe specific groups of people and that in order to analyse the experience of specific groups such as women it is necessary to look at that experience in its concrete social formation. In the United States, she noted that the rapid and steady increase in the participation of married women in wage labour in the latter half of the 20th century can be understood to be the result of the invasion of their traditional production for use and exchange in the home by capitalist production, and an increased demand for clerical and service workers in the capitalist sector. She noted that women were thereby freed into the latent reserve army and have been gradually incorporated into active

wage labour as capitalism has expanded. This argument she noted, has implications on the dynamic interaction between capitalism and patriarchy. The expansion of capitalist production work from the home and by incorporating women into the wage labour force whittled away the economic and ideological basis of patriarchy. However as there is no evidence that gender inequality both within the labour force and the family is decreasing, she noted that capitalism has not set the stage for the destruction of patriarchy and that the oppression of women has become incorporated into the dynamics of capitalism in a complex and contradictory interaction.

Irene Bruegel (1979) seeks to defend the reserve army role in the face of two major challenges based on the British experience from 1974-78, namely, the long term trend to women's increasing participation in the labour force, and the segregation of the labour force into men's and women's jobs. According to her, disposability is the crux of the matter in determining whether women constitute a reserve army and sets out to discover whether women constitute a disproportionate section of the unemployed in times of crisis. There are two aspects to Bruegel's disposability model. First, the idea that women might cushion men from the full impact of recession could be taken to imply that women's employment opportunities, taken as a whole, deteriorate in times of recession. On the other hand, it can be taken to mean that any individual woman is more susceptible to redundancy and unemployment than a man in an equivalent situation. Bruegel argues that individual for individual, women are more susceptible to redundancy and unemployment though this may not cushion men from the full impact of recessions. Also the long-term shift toward women in the workforce through the expansion of the service and the public sector have worked to cushion women from the full impact of the recessions. We find that Bruegel's analysis though recognising the long term shifts has its primary focus on the cyclical aspect. We also note that in Bruegel's work there is no attempt at integrating the peculiar role of women in the industrial reserve army in the process of capital accumulation.

Based on the work of Connelly (1978) and Irene Bruegel (1979), Lynda Yanz and David Smith (1983) criticise the simplistic assertion that "women function as a reserve army of labour for capital" without any proof or explanation. They are of the opinion that it is not wrong to describe women as playing a peculiar role in the reserve army at specific times and in specific places, though the concept as such is neither an adequate description nor explanation of women's subordinate status in the labour force. Based on the Canadian experience they find that an increasing number of women, particularly married women, have joined the labour force in recent times in clerical and service type jobs. Though these are low-paying dead-end jobs they are permanent and very few women are found to drop out. They

therefore find that as women have been integrated into the labour force, the reserve army characteristic of disposability was not fulfilled. In their view capitalism has a 'natural' tendency to extend women's employment opportunities because their labour power is available at a lower price, and this tendency forms the basis for a struggle around women's right to work, women's relation to the family and women's relation to men. The outcome of these struggles, in their opinion, was that women were available to capital in certain ways that correspond to the notion of women as a reserve army. And it is these struggles that were the key determinants in establishing women's relationship, to the labour force, not women's role as a reserve army of labour.

I agree with Yanz and Smith that assertion is not explanation, but find their own analysis wanting explanation. It is not clear why women's labour power is available at a lower price, and can this lower price and the struggles mentioned, be independent of a patriarchal gender ideology? I do not see the struggles as a determinant being distinctly separate from the reserve army role. We believe that the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy is a complex one which enables women as a group to play a peculiar role in the reserve army in terms of availability, disposability, and cheapness. While recognising that the reserve army is the result of the process of capital accumulation, in particular, the increasing organic composition of capital, the development of capitalism while releasing or freeing labour in one sector, also increases the demand for labour in other sectors, and we find that capitalism's demand for labour to be type-specific. The implications of women specific absorption and displacement, while part of the general absorption and displacement, cannot be analysed without introducing patriarchy, and without placing the specificity of female labour within a general model of capital accumulation.

Jane Humphries (1983) distinguishes clearly between the cyclical reserve army hypothesis and the secular reserve army hypothesis. She reviews the literature on this theme including the critiques of industrial reserve army hypothesis who suggest that occupational specialisation by sex introduces inflexibility in the labour market. In her view the secular reserve army hypothesis cannot be analysed without an idea of Marx and Engels' view of female proletarianisation, which also includes the substitutability aspect. Using the relevant US data, she explores how women constituted a latent reserve and the process of their assimilation in the labour force. She found that in the US conditions were ripe for a substitution of women workers for men. In her opinion debates on women's role in the industrial reserve army is not merely academic but has important political implications as well.

The Indian Scenario

We characterise the Indian scene as a labour surplus multistructural one, multistructural in the sense that there exists even in present times, very different forms of production, ranging from artisanal production to modern manufacture, with different degrees of subsumption to capital. We also note

that these different structures do not exist in isolation of each other but are interlinked and interact with one another. Given this multistructural system, our primary question is the experience of women in the labour force. Specifically we seek to obtain an understanding of the process of female proletarianisation in a multistructural context. Using both macro evidence and the numerous micro studies on women and work, we seek to explore the eight issues raised in the earlier part of the paper. Except for certain sporadic evidence we have on the pre-Independence period, our analysis will be confined largely to the contemporary situation in the non-agrarian spheres.

In the post Independence period the macro evidence on the manufacturing sector from the census data reveals a declining trend in the incidence of workers in the household sector, both males and females, though the magnitude of decline among females cannot be accurately stated, and an increase in the incidence of workers in non-Household manufacturing sector. Analysing the overall net employment effect of this structural shift in manufacturing sector from household to non-household production, it was found that for the country as a whole the net effect of employment among males was positive, while in the case of females it was negative. Clearly then, the growth of the non-household manufacturing sector is not accompanied by an absorption of women displaced from the Household manufacturing sector¹⁰. This displacement takes place against the backdrop of an overall secular decline in female work participation¹¹. Basing the analysis on occupational tables in the 1961 and 1971 Census Asok Mitra et al (1980) noted that "under those capital-intensive industrial sectors that have limited employment-generating capacity, the scope for employment for male workers in India has been limited but it has been even more constricted for female workers. Women workers are mostly employed in labour intensive occupations like tea, coffee, rubber and coconut plantations, carpet weaving, laundry, bidi making or making of matches, coir making, construction work, pottery and kiln work and food processing activities. With growing emphasis on food crop production in each successive plan there has not been any remarkable expansion in the employment generating capacity of the occupations mentioned above. On the other hand, with the increase in population and with unlimited supply of labour in the working ages there has been an increasingly tough competition for employment between men and women in all sectors of the economy, and consequently there is evidence of displacement of women workers from even those agricultural and household industrial activities in which they were engaged in former decades." This process coupled with the fact of a very sluggish growth of the organised sector as a whole, and of female employment in that sector in particular, has led to the emergence of the urban informal sector where women are largely concentrated and engaged in petty commodity production and trade. The urban informal sector constitutes a pool of stagnant labour reserve for the capitalist sectors of the economy. The formal capitalist sectors use a number of means, of extracting surplus value from the informal sector through a set of linkages, subcontracting production linkage being an important aspect.-(See John

Harriss 1982, Kalpagam 1981, Acharya 1983 etc) Given the demographic pressure, a sluggish industrialisation pace, and its accompanying capital intensiveness, this stagnant labour reserve is poised for a growth rather than a decline. The stagnancy refers to the likely assimilation in the capitalist labour force.

The latent reserve in the Indian context comprises of those women in peasant agriculture and in other pre-capitalist non-agrarian activities as well as those who due to continued unemployment and inability to procure work go out of the labour force. That women in peasant agriculture are getting rapidly proletarianised is evidenced from the remarkable growth in the agricultural labour force brought about by the modernisation and new technology in agriculture. While this is true of men too, the percentage increase in incidence among male agricultural labourers from 1961 to 1981 was from 13.73 per cent to 19.77 per cent, while in the case of women the increase was from 24.61 per cent to 45.57 per cent. That women tend to go out of the labour force when work is not available is evident from the fact that in the NSS 32nd Round the usual status labour force participation rate both among rural and urban females is lower than the current weekly status. This is also true for men. An exact quantification of the latent labour reserve is however not possible.

The floating labour reserve refers to that section of the labour force in the capitalist sector which for one reason or another are constantly renewed. All employment in capitalist sectors that are seasonal in nature or say age specific would constitute the floating reserve. No macro level indication of its quantum and trend is available or decipherable.

Given this overall macro picture, we shall examine specifically the following issues from various micro studies. First whether factory production and the introduction of machinery has drawn women, whether women have substituted men and whether it has lowered the value of male labour power. Second, what have been the changes in the nature of the labour process, and its implications on sex typing of tasks. Thirdly to what extent do women satisfy the three criteria of availability, disposability and cheapness to capital, and fourthly what is role of a patriarchal ideology and the material forms of its manifestation to ensure the three criteria. Our analysis shall be done by broad industry groups.

Textiles

In present times it has been noted that the indiscriminate growth of the powerloom sector constitutes an opportunity lost for the handloom sector which is not only employment intensive, but also provides employment for women particularly in preweaving processes (*Devaki Jan 1984*). Thus in this case new technology and new form of production organisation constitutes displacement of women. Analysing all three sectors—handloom, powerloom and the mill sector in Coimbatore (*Isa Baud 1983*) found that in the handloom sector with a greater proportion of family labour in it than the other two sectors, the task division in the labour process is based on age, gender

and family relationship and was unfavourable to an equal division of labour between men and women and to women's social autonomy. The other two sectors with their greater reliance on wage labour appeared more favourable though in the mill sector there was increasing job segregation and a declining proportion of women to all workers. The pre-Independent evidence on the mill sector in Bombay from *Radhakumar (1984)* is very revealing.

In contrast to the conclusion of M D Morris that the retrenchment of women from the mills since 1920 was due to the Maternity Benefit Act and the Act restricting women from working at night, she found that it was the changes in the labour process brought about by mechanisation that was responsible for retrenchment. The introduction of the cheese winding machine changed the winding process from one entailing some amount of hand labour to one using machines. The introduction of the universal winding machines simplified the winding and reeling processes by compressing them into one, and reeling yarn into hanks for dyeing, which was women's task, became unnecessary. She also noted that in the case of women attempts at standardisation of wage rates actually led to a fall in wages. The rationalisation measures in the cotton mill industry adversely affected women. A large number of tasks in which women were employed before ceased either to employ women, or ceased to exist as tasks. After 1926 there was no women waste pickers as the task was taken over by machines, no women doffers in the Frame Department, no women cheese winders as it was rationalised out of existence, no women reelers in the Warping department, and no women washer in the Bleaching department. After 1934 she noted that, there were no women employed in the carding room, neither as machine tenters, nor lap carriers, nor fly collectors. Nor were there any women handfolders left in the Folding Department. She also noted that the prevailing ideology defining women's primary role as a 'reproducer' caused women's wage labour in the mills to be described as supplementary which in fact it was not.

In woollen industry the growth of factory production sought to destroy the cottage industry in which women from poorer households were engaged in spinning. The handprinting industry is another case, in which women have been displaced due to mechanised printing (*Devaki Jam 1984*).

The study of the Lace makers of Narsapur by *Maria Mies (1980)* provides interesting insights. When lace making started in Narsapur around 1860 it was not with the intention of producing for exchange value. The Christian missionaries who had converted the untouchable caste Malas and Madigas who were formerly agricultural labourers, taught this craft to the women of the converts in order to overcome the social boycott they faced. At the turn of the century, lace export began on a regular commercial basis. Women of the fisherman caste, the Agnikulakshatriya who had always worked outside the house selling fish were engaged in lace work along with the Christians. In course of time due to agricultural pauperization women of the agricultural caste Kapu also joined. When production on commercial line started, the production process was reorganised along the classical putting out system.

Several women agents visited the artisans at certain intervals, gave them the thread and the designs their customers had ordered for and after a certain time collected the finished articles. The artisans were paid piece rate wages agreed upon. This system of production, Mies noted, was advantageous to the demand and supply of artisans. As the labour force is simply there "sitting in their house", the exporter does not run any risk when demand is slack, he simply gives less threat to a smaller number of women. And when he gets a lot of orders he has no problem to send his agents to more women who are just waiting to get work. These women thus constitute a labour reserve, and here we find that it is a mix of both latent and stagnant nature. On the political front, the scattered organisation of production and the isolation of producers from each other prevents labour from unionising and gives the merchant-exporter a greater control over labour.

The horizontal division of labour in the putting out system was accompanied by an elaborate system of vertical division of labour. Some women would make certain small designs, others would make joining parts, and all these parts and components would be collected by the agents and brought to a certain place where specially skilled women would join them together into lace goods.

With the rapid development of capitalist farming brought about by the Green Revolution in the 60's, the rich and middle peasants who had been able to accumulate, diverted a part of it to the lace business. Thus a class of rich merchants from Kamma, Kapu and other castes emerged. With this the sex and caste composition of the agents changed. While formerly women functioned as agents, now they were Kapu men. The men now cover a larger number of villages on bicycles for their distribution and collection. Men are also used for finishing work. Thus with the rise of this new group of exporters, the women have lost their access to the market sphere.

The organisation of the industry on a household basis and the social definition of the lace workers as "housewives" has resulted in a situation where the industry is fully integrated in the world market system but the relationship between the exporters and the producers, the women, have not been transformed into contractual wage labour relations, typical for factory work.

Studies on the Export Garments Industry *Kalpagam* (1981), *Rukmini Rao and Sabha Hussain* (1984) and *Nirmala Banerjee* (1984) highlight the following aspects. The structure of the industry in the major centres of the country differs. In Madras, garment units are found in both the factory and the non-factory sector. In the former case, the scale of production is generally large such that they adopt some form of the assembly line system (though the assembly line system itself varies with the scale of operation), while the non-factory sector consists of firms to which generally excess orders during peak times are subcontracted and where no form of assembly system prevails. On the assembly system only women are employed on time rate, whereas in the nonfactory units men are also employed in production, along with women in some units, where every worker produces a whole garment on a piece rate.

basis. The bulk of the women workforce in the industry is young, below 26 years of age, with the non-factory sector having a greater concentration of young women workers. It was also found that bulk of the women workers are first generation women workers in the family, and in a significant section, the male heads—either father or husbands had some form of industrial employment. In this sense, we can say that women in the industrial working class households constitute a latent reserve. With the development of new industries on capitalist lines, the women from these households are the first to be absorbed in the workforce of these industries.

Fragmentation of production and the creation of small work places found in Madras was also noted in the Delhi study, though in Delhi, put-out homework was also prevalent. Young women again were employed on the assembly line as in Madras, though in Delhi some companies employed them only on condition that they resign on marriage, which is not prevalent in Madras. The Delhi study also highlights instances of managements promoting submissive ideology among the workers. It emphatically states "It is true that women fulfill many family responsibilities and attempt to find work which is compatible with such responsibilities. Yet our study indicates that whenever capital requires cheap labor in the form of women, it is able to draw them out and place them in different jobs. What is reproduced at the workplace is the ideology of women's secondary status."

In Calcutta, the garment industry is largely in the non-factory sector, with workers also working from bustees. It was also found that production techniques were strictly an extension to the export market of the practices so far used for the domestic market—with no new elaborations. The sewing machines were not fitted with electrical motors unlike in large firms in Madras. The garment industry, though labour intensive, has low total labour cost compared to prices. The industry thus is constantly attempting to lower labour costs to make prices competitive in the export market. The women workers on their part are willing to accept low wage rates thus providing the industry with cheap labour.

Oral discussions with researchers on the Khadi industry reveals that with technological improvements of the Charkha, productivity has increased manyfold, but it has also caused a substitution of women of different age groups. While formerly old women of different age groups were employed, the technological improvement has caused through it, greater weight, a greater muscular strength to rotate the wheel that now only young women are employed on these charkhas.

Food Industry

Paddy processing is one of the major industries that has shown a striking decrease in female employment over the decade, consequent to the growth of mills (*Mukul Mukherjee 1983*). An analysis of the regional dimensions of such change *Gita Sen (1983)* has shown that in areas where commercialisation-proceeded rapidly, where the marketed surplus of paddy was significant, paddy milling made greater inroads on female employment in

handpounding. These also seemed to be areas with a high incidence of women labourers in paddy cultivation. Clearly in this case, capitalist production and exchange has caused a decrease in female employment.

The food processing industry in Kerala has the following characteristics as revealed in *Molly Mathew* (Undated). The fruit and vegetable processing industry was characterised by a low level of technology and unorganised character in respect of employment. The first processing industry is characterised by tendency towards "disorganisation". In the initial stages of the industry all the operations were done in the processing factories and the industry as a whole was in the organised sector. The beginning of the 1970's marked a new era in the processing industry with the advent of small scale shrimp peeling sheds, and with this development the industry was divided into organised and unorganised sectors. The suppliers started peeling sheds on a home scale basis employing the local women on piece-rate basis and a large number of women were thrown out of the organised sector. Both these industries are seasonal, the women workers are underemployed for part of the year. Also, in both, the demand for female labour is age specific—a majority of them are unmarried and below 30 years of age, and are asked to resign after marriage. This again constitutes an instance of floating labour reserve. A similar situation also prevails in other seasonal food-processing industry such as cashew processing for export in Tamilnadu where young unmarried girls are employed, and are renewed after they reach a "certain age or marriage". The seasonality and the consequent casualness of employment, permit such age-marital status specific demand for female labour.

In the prawn processing industry in Calcutta, *Banerjee* (1984) noted that women were involved in cleaning which is an unskilled task and grading which required skill, and these two tasks together determine both the acceptability and price of the product. However women's wages formed only about one sixth of the total value added to the cost of fresh prawns by processing till it left for export. The margin of returns on capitals can be as much as 50 per cent of this value added. In this situation she notes that wages are not low because the industry is keen to save on wages, and nor can the industry's success be attributed to its low wage cost. The low level of wages is explained in terms of its opportunity cost. Regarding the sex typing of tasks in the industry, she noted that so long as traditional tasks continued to be done by the same method and tools, modern industry does not alter the sex-wise division of tasks, which helps to keep traditionally inferior jobs at inferior wage levels even though they may be crucial tasks for the success of the new industry.

Other Industries

The Beedi Industry of Allahabad has been studied in *Zarina Bhatti* (1980). It is essentially an household industry employing Muslim women of all ages, though there are Beedi factories too, where the method of production does not change but workers are brought collectively under one roof. Here the women home-workers can sometimes be treated as wage labourers.

or as petty commodity producers. Prior to the abolition of the contract system, they were all wage workers working for piece rate to a contractor under putting out system (a case of formal subsumption to capital), and with the legislation abolishing contract system in Beedi industry, there has been no change in the organisation of production, only all raw material distributed by contractors to home workers is deemed as 'sale' and all collection of beedi from workers by the contractor is deemed 'purchase' thereby beating the legislation. These home-workers constitute a stagnant labour reserve. The domestic production of Beedi continues to survive alongside of factory production because the patriarchal ideology of secluding Muslim women ensures a supply of such women willing to work at home at any wage rate.

The Electrical Fan Industry of West Bengal revealed certain notable features, as seen from *Banerjee (1984)*. In the past this industry used to employ women in significant numbers in several skilled jobs, but in recent times these jobs have been taken over by men, and women are confined to crude unskilled jobs. This, she noted, was true not only of big factory units but also of small workshops. Women were pushed out from tasks, when a regulated wage structure increased the wages for those tasks and made it attractive for the male workers. Alongside of this, the supply of male workers for these tasks went up owing to retrenchment of male workers in large units that had gone in for rationalisation.

What can be concluded The salient features of the micro studies that we have so far covered highlight the following facts

(1) The development of capitalism in the labour surplus multi-structural context of India and the introduction of machinery has in many instances that we have seen, and contrary to what can be postulated from Marx and Engels, were female labour displacing. The kind of substitution of male labour by female labour as expected by Marx and Engels does not seem to have taken place. The development of capitalism in this context has also absorbed women in a number of new occupations.

(2) Women do in fact constitute a cheap labour reserve, though the form of labour reserve differs based on the organisation of that industry. In this multi-structural context, all three forms of latent, stagnant and floating are prevalent and identifiable, and each aids through a specific way the process of capitalist development.

(3) The tasks that women perform are generally unskilled and there are instances where with both a change in the labour process and without any change, women have been pushed out from skilled to unskilled tasks.

(4) Women are generally found to be engaged in tasks, where only crude tools are used and no supplementary motive power is provided.

(5) The process of 'informalisation' or 'disorganisation' of production units is done with a view to exploit the cheap labour that is available, female labour being an important constituent of it.

(6) Export oriented industries, where price competitiveness is necessary for survival and where instability is not infrequent, are not only seekers of cheap labour, but also attempt to substitute machinery by labour

These pointers do not however adequately answer the set of issues we had started examining. The evidence we have on those issues is rather sporadic in nature. This is to be expected as none of the studies had an explicit focus on any of these issues.

Specifically we find that while all studies had indicated that women do constitute cheap labour; with the exception of Banerjee (1984) none of the studies had attempted an analysis of wage determination. Even here the explanation is in a strictly conventional supply-demand framework. Though Banerjee (1983) recognises that women were specially vulnerable on the labour market, given the fact that "they were relatively less prepared to enter the labour market and more desperate when they did" and that the structure of wages reflect the social attitudes prevailing, there is very little analysis of the role of patriarchy in wage determination, and the concrete forms of its manifestation on both the supply and demand side, which imposes real constraints and compulsions on women, making them specially vulnerable. The interaction of patriarchy and capitalism is a domain that needs closer scrutiny and wider elaboration.

Also much more probing on the changes in labour process in particular instances and the accompanying implications on labour use by gender and skill needs to be done. In this context a whole examination of the concept of 'skill', and its implication in policy matters such as 'minimum wages' appears to be an immediate need.

- 1 For a clear and lucid account see Paul Sweezy, "Theory of Capitalist Development", apart from Marx's Capital Vol. 1
- 2 While we are aware that the reserve army principle holds true irrespective of the assumption on population growth, in concrete instances a greater demographic pressure will have a greater depressing effect on wage rate
- 3 The elaboration of a "multistructural system" is to be found in U. Kalpagam, "Labour Market Segmentation in a multistructural context and its implications on the female labour force" Labour, Capital and Society, Vol. 17, No. 2, November 1984
- 4 All works on Women as an industrial reserve army cited in the References at the end, with the exception of Jane Humphries (1983)
- 5 See Ricardo "On Machinery" p. 386 Chapter XXXI Vol. 1, The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, edited by Piero Sraffa with the collaboration of M. H. Dobb—"On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation" Cambridge University Press 1975

- 6 See Jane Humphries (1983)
- 7 Starting from Harry Braverman, others such as Andrew Friedman, Edwards, Machel Burawoy, The Brighton Labour Process Group have focussed on issues related to the Labour Process
- 8 See Veronica Beechey in Stephen Wood (ed) 1982
- 9 See the literature in Harold Wopk (ed) "The Articulation of the Modes of Production", Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1980
- 10* See 'Occupational Structure and Employment in Tamilnadu' by the author, mimeographed (1984)
- 11 See Ashok Mitra (1980)

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VIDYA RAO*

Women's Issues In The Performing Arts : A Review Article

THE DECADE 1975-85 was dedicated to women. In the midst of the general flurry of activity of research on women, employment schemes for women etc., a few festivals of music and dance purporting to take up woman-oriented themes also took place. That social themes and concerns managed to find a place in the citadel of 'pure' art is encouraging but the question is—what in fact was depicted and presented, what were seen to be women's issues? This article will attempt to identify the underlying perception of women's issues in some of these concerts and festivals, and to see how, by and large, the perception of the problem, and therefore naturally, the answers (if any) are confused and incoherent. This article does not cover the considerable activity undertaken by women's organisations, cultural groups of political and social organisations etc., but is limited to a few programmes-festivals of classical music and dance.

Talking to many musicians, dancers and interested listeners/observers¹, one gets the impression that as far as music and dance go, there is no woman's problem any more. All that was in the bad old days of the tawaifs and the devdasis and even then, it was the *performing arts* that suffered from their association with the disreputable 'nautch girls'². Now that music has been rescued from this unfortunate association and has been imbued with respectability, 'good' women have taken to music and dancing and everything is perfect. This is of course untrue but to argue out every inaccuracy would require a separate article to itself. Suffice it to say that at least some performing artists have felt that women's issues are important, and impinge on their lives and work. But the question is what is this problem, and how is it perceived?

One point of view has been to see the problem as one of a continuing struggle against old prejudices that have not died. Often women artists feel they have to face tremendous social pressures. 'We are not 'bajis' ' said one woman vehemently. 'We are educated and cultured—we are different'. Her statement is replete with meaning at so many levels—that society still often treats the woman artiste as someone slightly dis-reputable, available, not quite the 'good woman' (unless of course the art is trivialised to the level of a hobby which does *not* afford an income and means of livelihood), that she in

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turn has internalised this dichotomy of the 'virtuous housewife' and the 'unsheltered' woman³ (who perforce has to work and earn to feed her family); that she considers herself better than, different from the 'baijis' of yesterday. Finally, such an attitude that condemns the 'baiji'⁴ cannot be separated from an attitude that sees all performing women as 'on display' and therefore not respectable

Another point of view sees the problem—as in other discipline also—as one of lack of opportunity and lack of visibility. The feeling that women do not get a chance led to a festival devoted to women musicians⁵—a musical delight no doubt, a genuine attempt to bring on to the concert platform talented women who would otherwise have languished in small towns buried under the trivia of domestic chores and chafing at the lack of time, space and opportunity to prove themselves. The festival brought together a number of such talented women, it put paid to the myths that women cannot perform certain styles or instruments (the festival featured Ashgari Begum, singer of dhrupad, and several women playing sarangi, shehnai and tabla among other instruments, moreover, all accompanists were women) and it was inspired by a tremendous desire to prove that women can be as good musicians as men. These are important issues and concerns and can go a long way to changing the image and situation of women artistes. But however genuine the concern, the 'bringing out' approach tackles only the surface and does not go to the root of the problem. Visibility alone means nothing, in any case, such festivals would have to be repeated regularly to have even a small impact.

Another approach appears to be the 'evaluation women's contribution' type, where paens of praise are sung to the great women composers and artistes—among them Meera and Andal. This is supposed to show how Indian cultural traditions have always accorded a place of respect for women.⁶ While it is essential to evaluate women's contribution, this too becomes rather meaningless unless such an exercise is in the context of social and political conditions of the time. Programmes inspired by this approach have also tended to look at 'the many facets of woman'.⁷ Such programmes treat the audience to a 'modern' version (with commentaries and other such concessions to 'non-art') of the three hundred and eighty-four possible varieties of *nayikas*⁸—their many moods and emotions—all depicted with the originality and depth of a Mills and Boon novelette and *all* seeing woman in relation to a man, expressing socially 'approved' emotions as society expects they are to be expressed.⁹ These static masks do not depict anything even remotely approximating the many facets of real women but rather, confine themselves to that mythic and mystified category 'Woman'. Such depictions far from joining hands with the women's movement strike it a grievous blow by reinforcing the 'feminine mystique' and perpetrating and reinforcing traditional stereotypes. While the horrendous visuals of mass media are terrifying for their total hold over so many people, these images are no less pernicious because they purport to be classical culture and therefore better than the low-brow mish-mash of a thousand bad films.

Where a genuine issue is taken up, the perception of the problem is fuzzy resulting in either glorifying the traditional institutions or indulging in a very crude critique of them. One festival cum seminar¹⁰ attempted to bring to the national stage that group of women who have always performed, who continue to perform, often under very difficult circumstances and who are finding themselves increasingly marginalised and pushed out by a society where the context in which music and other entertainment occurs has changed. In its seminar sessions, the festival made an attempt to understand from a socio-historical perspective, the role and contribution of these women to the development of Indian music and dance. The fact that the attempt could not really succeed¹¹ was in great part due to the fact that there are as many opinions and perceptions on just what the women-and-music-question was about as there were seminarists.

It was significant that the discussions were marked by a distinct note of apology. Repeatedly, middle class artistes stressed that they were not 'cheap' women. Women from the traditional singing families who have managed to move out of that context refused to discuss any social issues, but focussed only on musical techniques and were preoccupied with proving that *thumri-dadra*¹² are not after all, as is popularly believed, 'upa shastriya' music. A spokesman (male) of the traditional singers emphasised the purity of stock, impeccable morals and rigorous training of the women and traced the low status suffered by them as due to 'Muslim influence'. The uncomfortable fact that traditionally *sringara* was the mainstay of the woman singer's repertoire could never be satisfactorily explained away. Justification for it was found by stressing that *sringara rasa* is a path to the supreme (presumably asexual) bliss¹³, or even by quoting the many romantic *khyal bandishes* in even such 'serious' ragas as *Malkauns*.

Significantly, the only statement that came through with some clarity was made by an 80-year old Chaudharayin of the old tradition—but this was too general a statement—that the relationship between women singers and society is a close one. The contradictions that could not be resolved surfaced again in audience responses. Thus one informed opinion¹⁴ was appalled at this attempt to revive such traditions and forms that had 'met with their natural death'¹⁵—though earlier the same writer had argued that such a festival was unnecessary precisely because there was no dearth of good singers of the traditional repertoire ('women with good education and culture'¹⁶ presumably middle class) and that the styles were in fact quite healthy. The music having been extricated from the *baithaks* and *mehfils*, was moreover now bestowed with 'respectability' and spiritual bias¹⁷. From these contradictory statements one can only deduce that the writer's sense of propriety was offended at the sight of women, whom he had hoped had passed into oblivion, taking over the pure and spiritual concert stage, if only for a brief four days. The same writer also focused great attention on the actual music (to the neglect of even the hint of an issue—historical or social) which he condemned as light and coquettish and lamented the fact that all the work of the great music reformers had come to naught¹⁸. What is missed in such a view is that

the so-called lightness or coquetry of some of the performances is in fact a statement of women's status as performers—an object on display, an entertainer acting out stereotyped emotions, pandering to the audience's (traditionally all-male) view of what a woman should be. The fact that one woman can serenely and with confidence render vilambit and drut khayals in Shree raga and another dressed in tawdry tinsel, should dance coquettishly to explicitly erotic lyrics is less a comment on the ability or morality of either as on the very different contexts in which each lives, earns and performs.

It should appear that we have a long way to go before a meaningful understanding develops about what the crux of the woman question is, and how it is linked to the performing arts. The problem is of the great gaps in communication between academicians, activists and artists who seem to be speaking such different languages. But at least one dancer has experimented with understanding the material basis of dance and showing the links between and the mystification of ordinary economic activities movements, martial arts into classical dance.¹⁹ This experiment has not focussed on women's issues per se, but by taking a realistic look at dance traditions, in fact contributes more to our understanding of the classical performing arts, artistes and society than all other 'woman oriented' programmes.

It is interesting that Chandralekha (who conceived and choreographed Angika) is more than a classical dancer. She sees herself as a activist using skills like dance etc., to bring about social change and this is the crux of the matter. For the classical performing arts to reflect and act upon, more than merely superficially, the concerns of the Women's Decade, it needs more participation from activists and social scientists than has taken place.²⁰

In conclusion, and to demonstrate one of the recent (and welcome) trends has been for classical musicians to incorporate and study folk music folk songs. It is one thing to understand how folk forms are linked both textually and musically to the 'classical' traditions. But any textual analysis also evokes comment on the content of that text. Thus one folk song depicts the banter between a woman and her nanad (husband's sister) on the birth of the former's son. The nanad demands, blackmails and gets for herself the bhabhi's (sister-in-law's) gold bracelet which the bhabhi is at first loth to part with ('My father gave this to me', she says). At one level this is a charming traditional song, at another, a cold reminder of the horror of dowry demands and dowry deaths. How is one to reconcile and make some sense of these two responses?

In quite another context, Utsa Patnaik states 'The various forms of subordination of one class of human beings by another have not been swept away here by any revolutionary upheaval. On the contrary, their characteristics have accumulated and have mutated sometimes under the impact of capitalism to produce an extraordinary amalgam of the modern and the archaic. Anachronistic pre-capitalist social relations and ideology form an incubus on the new society painfully attempting to chart a capitalist path of development.²¹ To my mind, it is this approach spelled out in the paragraph above which involves studying social processes that will help us to arrive at a

deeper understanding of the problem of women's issues in the performing arts

- 1 Observations based on interviews with artists, students, teachers, critics and informed audience
- 2 See especially the following
W H Deshpande, *Maharashtra's Contribution to Music*, New Delhi 1972, pp 6, 51, Mohan Khokar 'Dance in Transition: The Pioneers' in *Marg*, Vol XXXVI, No 2, November, 1984 L G Sumitra, *Women in the performing arts* (unpublished paper)
- 3 Hanna Papanek, Gail Minault, *Separate Worlds and Symbolic Shelter* 1980, New Delhi has a discussion on the 'unsheltered' woman
- 4 Extending this further, traditional women singers will protest vehemently that they are not prostitutes—as indeed they are *not*, but a society that creates prostitutes is a society that devalues *all* women in one way or another
- 5 *Bhairav Se Sohani Tak*, New Delhi, February, 1983
- 6 An example of this was a festival organised in the early part of the Decade by Sangeet Natak Academy
- 7 An example of such an approach is *Shree The Many Facets of Woman*, New Delhi, May 1985
- 8 The Nayika, the woman character is the central figure in dance and music and yet curiously a sense of a real person is absent in the detailed and carefully delineated depictions. Each expresses mechanically the set emotions of coyness, anger, sorrow (at separation) and joy (again at reunion)
- 9 See 'Nayika' in US Krishna Rao *A Dictionary of Bharata Nāṭya* New Delhi, 1980, pp 55, 56
- 10 *Women Music Makers of India*, New Delhi, September, 1984
- 11 See 'Women Musicians, A Seminar' in the Bulletin of the Centre for Women's Development Studies Vol 2, No 2, November, 1984
- 12 So-called lighter styles, associated generally with women singers
- 13 Any serious discussion of women's issues and the performing arts cannot shy away from the significance of the romantic-erotic element in the traditional repertoire, and understanding how and why it comes to be associated with it. Wishing it away or trying to whitewash it does not get rid of the problem. Though, ofcourse, the very ambivalence towards it—it is also considered *rasa*—is significant.
- 14 See 'Women Musicians Fail To Impress', *Statesman*, 10th Sept'84
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Such a view was also expressed by many in the audience
- 19 *Angika* by Chandralekha. For a brief description see NCPA's brochure of this experiment, and brochure issued on the occasion of Max Muller Bhavan, Madras 25th anniversary celebrations
- 20 Admittedly this is not easy. By their very nature, the classical arts are exclusive and esoteric and guard their exclusiveness jealously. It is difficult for an 'outsider' to break in—and almost everyone who is not part of the mystification process is considered an outsider. This is however not to say that activists have not, on their own, experimented with music and dance. They have—but those experiments are quite different in nature, content and context. They would moreover require consideration by themselves.
- 21 Introduction to Patnaik and Dingwaney(ed) *Chains of Serutude, Bondage and Slavery in India*, New Delhi, 1985, pp 6, 25

BOOK REVIEWS

MARGARET RANDALL, *SANDINO'S DAUGHTER'S* Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle, New Star Books Vancouver/Toronto, 1981

WRITING ABOUT the participation of women in the Telangana movement, P. Sundarayya referred to that tremendous revolutionary spirit and energy that is smouldering in our economically and socially oppressed womenfolk. If we only take a little trouble to enable it to emerge out of its old tradition-bound shell, and try to channel it in the proper direction, what a mighty upheaval it will lead to!¹

Six years ago and twenty eight years after that heroic struggle in our part of the world, a small nation of three million people, 51% of whom were women, successfully liberated itself. The struggle of the Nicaraguan people began more than half a century ago and culminated in the overthrow of one of the most brutal dictatorships, thereby becoming a thorn in the global strategy of the mighty economic and military power of the United States to chain the major part of the world to poverty, illiteracy and the worst kinds of social and state oppression in order to protect the interests of private profit. Characteristic of the later part of this struggle has been the remarkable participation by women.

Nicaraguan women did not merely participate in unprecedented numbers, they successfully performed tasks hitherto thought primarily to be the concern of men. As Margaret Randall describes it, "Women fought in the front lines as FSLN militants, participated in support tasks, worked under cover in government offices and were involved in every facet of the anti-Somoza opposition movement. By the final offensive, women made up 30% of the Sandinist army and held important leadership positions, commanding everything from small units to full battalions. In fact, the contribution of women, both in kind and in quantity, has been an *essential* component of the Nicaraguan Revolution, leaving its mark both on the political, economic and social changes introduced after July 1979 and on the existing social relations between men and women."

Sandino's Daughters attempts to record in exemplified form how women from different social backgrounds transformed themselves while fighting alongside their brothers to transform their homeland. The book is befittingly dedicated to "the women and men who with their lives defeated the old

Nicaragua and to all those who with their lives are creating the new one'

What drew women into the struggle in such large numbers? How did they integrate their own liberation with the more general struggle of people fighting against oppression? What made it possible for them to sacrifice the ultimate, their own lives and those of their children for the cause of a further freedom? What conclusions can we draw from the amazing radicalisation of women's aspirations, their desire to contribute and sense of responsibility to the struggle for a just society—both with regard to the women and with regard to the struggle? These are some of the questions which keep nagging at you while reading these extraordinary, compelling and at the same time moving testimonies of Nicaraguan women in struggle

The successful organising by the FSLN (Sandinist National Liberation Front) of women on a large scale began only in 1977 with the founding of AMPRONAC (Association of Nicaraguan Women Confronting the Nation's Problems) which after the victory of the Revolution, was renamed Luisa Amanda Espinosa Women's Association in honour of the first woman to die fighting in the ranks of the FSLN

Gloria Carrion, 26, founding member of AMPRONAC, points out that in Nicaragua and perhaps in Latin America in general—women are the centres of their families—emotionally, ideologically and economically. This is particularly the case for working class and peasant women. Often abandoned by their unemployed husbands, women are forced to take any job to support their families. It is their class condition, in the first place, which drew women to the revolutionary struggle

Amada Pineda, 36, typical peasant woman, had nine children of which one died in the war, two died of measles and pneumonia because they could not afford a doctor, and a two month old baby died in a rainstorm when Amada had to flee the guards. She was gang-raped by members of the National Guard. She says: 'As for me, many women have suffered what I have. Think of the women in Cuba—so many were captured, tortured and raped. There are many women in Nicaragua who can tell of the barbarities they have suffered

Gladys Baez, whose mother washed and ironed to support the two of them, started her political life in the late fifties. She was a member of the Socialist Party of Nicaragua, representing its women's wing at the Moscow Women's Congress in 1960. She left the party because of its biased attitude towards her as a woman and soon after joined the FSLN, recognising as correct its position on the need for armed struggle as against the Socialist Party's commitment to peaceful transition. She was the first woman to go into the mountains, from where much of the guerrilla activity was carried out and where all the training for the final military assaults was conducted. While in jail, she was tortured to such an extent that all doctors had given her up. Speaking about her condition, she says: "But I refused to accept the fact that I was going to die, although I didn't think I would recover as much as I have. It took me two years"

Melania Davila, forced into prostitution at the age of eighteen, joined the FSLN seven years ago. Her seventeen year-old son died fighting during the attack on Leon, a month before victory. A few months earlier she had borrowed 1,200 cordobas to buy his release from prison. "I just paid back the last 80 cordobas last month" she said, "and my son has been dead for seven months now"

Women from all classes reacted to the terrible and widespread repression unleashed by the Somoza regime. This repression was particularly directed against the young who formed the dominant force in the struggle. Political assassinations of even eight, nine, ten year olds were not uncommon. Women were in the forefront of the fight for the release of political prisoners and in defence of the young. Beginning with supportive tasks they went on to assume positions of leadership of the armed struggle.

In August 1978 an FSLN commando occupied the National Palace, took hundreds hostage and later exchanged them for the release of political prisoners, a million dollars and the publication of a manifesto. Dora Maria Tellez, Commander Two of this operation which drew the attention of the world to the ongoing struggle, joined the FSLN at sixteen and was still studying medicine when she went underground in January 1976. In a short story about how she brought her first baby into the world she writes: "Have I completed my mission by aiding his birth? I must say *no*. Our work will be done when we can give these young ones a new world, a different world. I must be committed to the birth of that new world which like every delivery will be painful and at the same time joyous."

Monica Baltodano, Guerrilla Commander, daughter of working class parents who made it to a petty-bourgeois existence, was one of three guerrilla leaders who led the final offensive in the capital. From a pacifist Christian, she became one of the leaders of the armed struggle. Talking about the sexist attitudes of some comrades in the FER (Revolutionary Students' Federation) and in the FSLN, she says: "There were a lot of arguments. Some comrades were open to dealing with sexism while others remained closed. It's been a long struggle. We won those battles through discussions and by women comrades demonstrating their ability and their resistance."

On March 8, Don Perez Vega, a notorious general of the National Guard, was found dead in the house of Nora Astorga. He had been executed by members of the FSLN. Nora had lured him to her house, disarmed and undressed him, then giving the signal for the armed comrades to burst in and overpower him. She undertook this task in spite of being warned of the misconceptions which would follow and of the necessity of separation from her two small children. Today she is Special Attorney General in charge of the prosecution of the more than 7,500 members of the National Guard and other functionaries of the Somoza regime being tried for their crimes in the people's courts.

Sister Martha, a Catholic nun in a overwhelmingly Catholic country talks of how sections of the church came to support the armed struggle against Somoza. "The problem is that many sections of the Church have betrayed

the Gospel's message. They've preached an alienating faith that works against the people's interests." Referring to the accusation of Somoza's men that she was being paid by the international communist movement, she says "Imagine—I don't even know what the international communist movement might be, I really don't. If the church is communist because it struggles for justice, well I guess that makes me a communist."

The struggle threw up many issues. Describing domestic work as one of the obstacles which prevented the full participation of women in the past, Gloria Carrion says: Our women assume that work individually but we believe that it is a social responsibility. It is a part of the work of the society as a whole. It must be performed not only by women. Men must also take responsibility for this work.

The case of 18-year old Lesbia Lopez provoke much discussion. Caught while putting up posters, she was imprisoned, tortured and raped. From this rape she conceived her first daughter. At the time of her pregnancy two views were expressed, one that she should abort the child, as if paternity were the only issue, and the other, that the child would be the mother's and the baby a symbol of struggle and resistance.

The experiences of the struggle challenged and ruptured many aspects of the old value system. Nicaragua is a traditionally Catholic country whose people—and in particular, its women—are even today terribly believing. Especially for those young women who took up arms and got married in the guerrilla camps by taking the oath in front of their comrades, without even the presence of a priest, the prospect of a return to the old way of life is horrifying. It is these women who took the initiative to form all-women companies within the army. Such are the 'women in olive green', most of them forced by poverty and the terrible repression to join the armed struggle, today proud of their contribution to the liberation of their people and determined to keep alive the new tradition of fighting women.

The victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution owes much to the intensity of feeling of its women for their children, for their people, for the Revolution. This intensity of feeling which, converted into revolutionary spirit and energy gave the revolution such a powerful impetus, has been most vividly expressed in the letter of a mother to her daughter. 24-year old Idania Fernandez was assassinated along with five other comrades by the National Guard on April 16, 1979. A month earlier, in a letter to her daughter, she wrote: "This is an important time for people everywhere, today in Nicaragua, and later in other countries of Latin America and throughout the world. The Revolution demands all each of us has to give, and our own consciousness demands that as individuals we act in an exemplary way, to be as useful as possible to this process."

I hope that someday, not too far off, you may be able to live in a free society where you can grow and develop as human beings should, where people are brothers and sisters, not enemies.

You must learn the value of the paradise of peace and freedom you are

going to be able to enjoy I say this because the best of our brave people have given their precious blood so children won't have to live under this repression, humiliation and misery so many men, women and children have suffered in our beautiful Nicaragua

I am telling you all this in case I'm not able to tell you personally or no one else tells you these things A mother isn't just someone who gives birth and cares for her child, a mother feels the pain of all children, the pain of all peoples as if they had been born from her womb My greatest desire is that one day you will become a true woman with a great love of humanity And that you'll know how to defend justice, always defend it against whatever and whomever would trample it."

For people fighting against oppression and for a new society the world over, the testimonies compiled in this book can serve both as a source of inspiration and as a fund of revolutionary experience

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ARLENE EISEN WOMEN AND REVOLUTION IN VIETNAM Zed Books
Limited, London, 1984

ARLENE EISEN, journalist, research worker, teacher in women's studies and activist in civil rights, anti-war and women's movements, follows up her first book 'Women in Vietnam (1974)' with this current study that gives an account of Vietnamese women since liberation in 1975. Based on interviews, reports and historical research, her new book traces the progress of Vietnamese women's struggle for liberation and emancipation within the framework of socialist construction. The book also takes up some important questions from the debate between feminism and socialist theory. It also makes a contribution to an understanding of the difficulties and problems that a Third World country faces in building socialism. This understanding brings into sharper focus the concept of a 'revolution within the revolution', the extent of women's participation in political leadership and decision-making in different aspects of Vietnamese life.

In Vietnam, as elsewhere, women have come to symbolise the strength of National Liberation Movements and the potential of women. Would the gains made by women during the war expand in peace time or would socialists abandon their commitments to women, once in power? Feminists have often idealised the liberation-women equation and rejected socialism as the means of providing an environment for the liberation of women. The over-throwing of all sex roles is the feminist dream, not the Vietnamese reality, which is a combination of both the militia woman and the bereaved mother knitting socks for soldiers. The goal of the Vietnamese women's movement is not to legitimise feminist goals, but to face day to day problems in a war ravaged, economically backward country. To them status may not figure as the primary concern when they have trouble in meeting the nutritional and health requirements of the family.

When Vietnamese women discuss liberation, they speak from the experience of a people that have survived feudal oppression, defeated French colonialism, fought US occupation and who are now in the process of building socialism. Conditions have pushed them very hard and very far. We see how, from being beasts of burden, women have transformed into a strong force in Vietnamese society, despite poverty, war and death. In this process, Eisen is concerned in seeking answers to proclaimed feminist goals. Is it possible for certain roles to maintain their status as 'women's work' without being oppressive to women? Can the patriarchal family evolve into a democratic

one under socialism? What priority do socialists place on women's liberation? The Vietnamese definition of liberation focuses on economic security, right to work at a job, health, education, rest, equal rights and freedom from polygamy and other patriarchal traditions. They also point to the need for an ideological struggle that would undermine the psychological subordination of women. For them the oppressors are not so much men as feudalists, colonialists and imperialists. This is where the unity of colonised people and poor peasants is reflected in the struggle for revolutionary change.

The feminist programme, on the other hand, in its universalised form, lists its priorities as (i) women's control over their bodies relating to sexual relations, motherhood, health, education, violence, etc., (ii) Freedom of choice in marriage, democracy within the family, and sharing of domestic responsibility, (iii) equal access to jobs and political leadership, equal pay, privileges, (iv) respect in the popular culture for "feminine" qualities. Eisen does not consider it "anthropologically sound" to impose such universalisation of goals on Vietnamese women. She seems to be making some political concessions of the Feminist viewpoint after her current Vietnamese study although she questions the logic, arguments and political perspective of the voice of Vietnamese women—the Women's Union.

The book is divided into two sections, 'Roots of Women's Oppression' which provides the historical context and 'Seeds of Emancipation' which analyses the conditions that make liberation possible in Vietnam. The conclusion is a portrait of progress on the women's front—a reflection of unity, organisation and vision not only in defending but also in expanding the rights that have been won.

N.R.

DEVAKI JAIN, NIRMALA BANERJEE (Ed) TYRANNY OF THE HOUSEHOLD,
Shakti Books, 1985, pp 278, Rs 125

"Family with father and mother or husband and wife and the rituals that have gone into marriage, and the rules of behaviour, and the role allocation that have been spelt out, sometimes provide an impossible barrier to equality between the sexes"—is the statement and understanding that runs through the theme of this book. The highlights of the various papers covering aspects of women's life in India and Bangladesh are, thus, terms like "the family with father and mother or husband and wife", "rituals", "rules of behaviour", "role allocation" which take off from a common theoretical premise that "women from within households have the common experience of facing different forms of intra-household subordination whatever class or caste" and it is further stated conclusively that "this common experience within this world of the household could not only provide the basis of organisation but also provide perspectives which could be called feminism or the method and articulation of women". Unfortunately, apart from attempting to prove that 'gender-based' inequality is a harsh reality, the studies provide little in terms of developing a 'perspective', called feminism or anything else. However, the book does make interesting reading as it does elaborate on aspects of everyday life (obvious to many) and is an informative package for those who have not had anything to do with, be it the women's movement or any other economic, political and social issues weighing down the majority of the people in our country.

What are the related points regarding the problems concerning women highlighted by the authors? Amartya Sen and Sunil Sengupta record the high incidence of undernourishment, even of severe and disastrous types in every category owning less or no land. Sex bias is reflected in the greater prevalence of undernourishment of various degrees among girls than boys—resulting in lesser growth dynamics of girls vis a vis boys. A conclusion drawn by AKM Chowdhury in his study of maternal nutrition in rural Bangladesh that "food supplementation to pregnant or lactating women during the lean period probably could help protect women from nutritional deterioration, prevent low birth weight and infant's death and increase people's work capacity", discloses nothing about the class of women he may be referring to, their economic compulsions and, basically fails to extend his conclusion to

the question (if not the answer) as to where the food will come from, who is to be blamed for below subsistence consumption pattern among the women he mentions, although he does begin with an understanding that "poverty, the most pressing problem in rural Bangladesh is manifest in socio-economic disruptions, ill health and poor nutritional conditions for all people"

Srilatha Batliwala draws up an account sheet of the nature of work and calorie cost and energy expended by the women. She delves into the problems of the programme and implementation of health care centres and their services in relation to the women. These aspects of women's deprivation can hardly open the doors to a discussion on the actual pattern of women's work in different regions. Moreover, where will this search lead us to—the nature of work and wage structure? An analysis of the mobilisation of women's labour as cheap variable? Even without burdening the author with such questions which may make the subject more complex than it already is for her, one waited till the end to hear at least one related question arising from the paper—How is women's work and health connected with the exploitative social relations within which they operate.

Generously using the nationwide official data sources, i.e., the population census and the national sample surveys, the Visaria study does not provide insights beyond the exposition of the biased concepts used in official data about categories such as 'head of the household'. She is unable to explain the economic and social importance of such households, what are concretely its implications for women's status in the country and its relevance for the household as an economic unit within the wider class context. Besides, does such redefinition and identification make a difference to women's position as a class of agricultural labourers?

Dutt's paper essentially dealing with the section of scheduled caste/scheduled tribe women, their work division, areas of work, is concerned with the impact of the development programmes on these sections and especially their women. Informative in terms of the nature of work and occupational pattern and attempts to expose the sham of the 'trickling down' impact of the development plans with regard to women, he ends his note with an appeal for special attention to women in programmes formulated, without in any way raising a question about the policy itself and its pretensions about tribal development. K. S. Krishnaswamy and Rajgopal, except for making a slight variation in terms of the area of study, and raising objections to specific programmes, pose no new questions about the 'public efforts' as such and their introduction in a social vacuum as it were.

The section on the labour market and the household could have offered the scope for an in depth study of the problems of women's employment, exploitation of women's labour in the unorganised sector, and the link between women's role in social production and their status as (a) citizens of the country (b) members of a particular class (c) and as an oppressed sex—and its interconnections which alone can help us to develop a perspective and give a direction to the women's movement. However, all the studies upto now in this book have only taken us on a cyclical journey round such micro-units as

the household, restricting itself to a deductive analysis and directionless empiricism. Gita Sen's paper, thus, examines the inter-regional variations in the relative participation of women, as wage labour in agriculture and the conclusion is drawn on the basis of factors that may be governing these variables. The factors investigated are land inequality (in terms of holdings), high or low, and agro-climatic factors. Another interesting factor is that of regional migration of the workforce affecting women's employment in a given area. The survey covering a number of states draws certain correlations between conditions and incidence of women work force in the rural sector. It comments on the categories and measures of evaluating women's employment and unemployment rates and points out certain drawbacks in the NSS and Rural Labour Enquiry methodology for estimating the same. However, given the limitations in terms of number of variables taken for investigating into such correlation, and the static nature of the analysis, which makes it ahistorical, it fails to grasp the dynamics of the *process* of development, the production relations and women's labour—its nature and incidence in relation to the process. While noting the attention given to the regional variations, the author herself realises that 'there still remains scope for a better understanding of the role of women in the rural workforce' and also that 'a more detailed breakdown of agricultural operations would perhaps relieve this problem (of defining 'others' as a category of work)'. It might also make it possible for them to use data to examine changes in the ages and sex-based division of labour as new agricultural techniques are introduced for example."

Similarly, Nirmala Banerjee is concerned with the nature and sex-wise discrimination in the labour market. After allowing for standard economic factors which account for women's relatively inferior position, she suggests that the nature of occupations assigned to women and their evaluation by society are once again closely related to women's work and its evaluation within the household. She details the nature of work women are involved in, its resulting health hazards and points out that because women's skills usually consist of (a) operating without proper tools and (b) capital and energy saving ingenuity (c) its traditional nature—"The combined result of all these characteristics is that in a fast expanding, quality conscious market, women's skills are about the first to be replaced since their slow unstandardised output creates bottlenecks". Further, that the 'practices of denying women access to work on mechanised processes and more sophisticated skills is as widespread today as before'. She concludes that the "inferior position of women in the labour market is not because they are necessarily confined to the production of inferior products or to localised markets. Their major handicap in the labour market is the identification of their work with low technology operations". This she further analyses as due to the general belief that a woman's primary role is that of a housewife.

Surprisingly, both Sen's and Banerjee's papers, nowhere raise certain fundamental questions about

(a) the agrarian policy of the state which is leading to an increasing pauperisation of the peasant masses and the increasing number of women

joining the agricultural labour force

(b) the large-scale displacement of women workers owing to mechanisation and the industrial policies of the state which was leading to increasing unemployment, particularly among women

Why are no questions directed at state policies that are affecting the lives of men, women and children in our country, giving rise to increasing unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, decline in real wages, exploitation by the multinationals. Can all these issues be merely brushed aside and reduced to just 'sex bias' in official categories and the common belief and attitude of *the society*? How does one characterise such a society? For the authors, there is no need to do so for their analysis is confined to sex *discrimination*, intra-household. Where are we being led to? Whose interests are being served by atomising the issues?

Jain and Krishnamurthy and Mukherjee's papers essentially deal with bringing into light the numerous productive tasks that women do, the methodology to be applied in collecting 'good' data on women whether they be collected through close observation stretched over long period or short periods, and a methodology for evaluation of work—that is, attempts at a possible way of valuing women's labour. In a nutshell, to casually play around with the concepts of use value and exchange value.

Although the book does provide interesting insights into the nature of oppression of women within the household, these insights are not developed to the level of any generalisation relevant to the women's movement. By using the most obvious unit of analysis—the household—the book gets caught in the day to day routine of women's existence, and ignoring the whole nexus of economic and social relations in which such an existence is placed. This, unfortunately takes the book into a political cul-de-sac where neither debate nor action can be seriously pursued.

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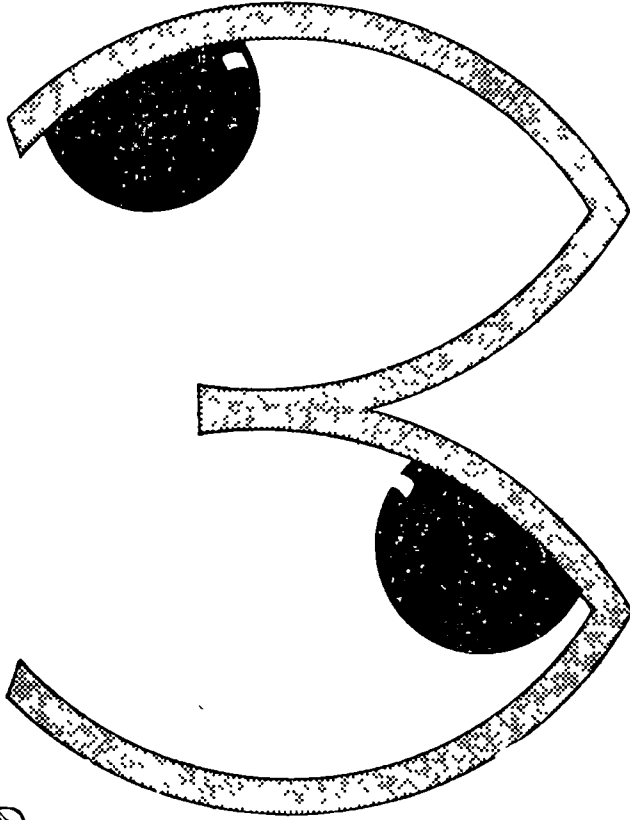
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EDITORIAL NOTE

WHEN IN THE 1950s the problems of underdeveloped countries became an acceptable area of study within the corpus of orthodox "economics" and found their way into university curricula, the conventional wisdom in the profession attributed underdevelopment essentially to a low rate of savings. Ragner Nurkse propounded his well-known concept of a "vicious circle of poverty", "a country is poor because it is poor", a poor country cannot afford a high rate of savings, and hence its growth rate remains low, perpetuating its poverty. This explanation of course was facile, it originated from classes, from production relations, from the mode of deployment was after all no lower in, say, India than in the U S, but in this very facileness lay its appeal. By obliterating the complex ensemble of relations that constitute an underdeveloped society, it gave the problem of development of such a society a superficial air of easy fractability.

For any one nurtured in this intellectual milieu, the current state of the Indian economy must appear incomprehensible. India today has been having for some time very respectable rate of savings, more respectable than that of many other countries, yet its growth-rate on average continues to be among the lowest. And this low growth rate has persisted stubbornly even as the rate of savings has climbed up significantly over the years. Moreover, despite the high rate of savings, Indian planning is faced with an acute resource crisis. Public investment in critical areas is curtailed for lack of resources despite the high overall savings rate in the economy. Clearly the problem of resource mobilisation for development is far from being identical with the problem of stepping up the rate of savings in the economy. What the task of resource mobilisation entails in the Indian economy today constitutes the content of the lead article by Dr. Ashok Mitra in the current number of *Scientist*. At a time when the resource crisis, itself an outcome of the policies of the government dictated by its class predilections, is pushing it towards disastrous compromises with imperialism, a careful examination of this crisis, together with concrete suggestions for an alternative course of actions is an urgent necessity and this is what the lead article tries to do. Alongside resource mobilisation, it lays great stress on the need for resource devolution, from the centre to the states and to the units below, in a polity like ours.

The accompanying piece by Amal Sanyal is also concerned with the political economy of the resource crisis. The central government budgets in recent years have been showing deficits in the current account itself, this is

because of the current expenditure, composed mainly of transfers to the proprietary classes and of the costs of maintaining the mammoth government apparatus, have bloated to an extent where the current revenues, from whose incidence the proprietary classes have become increasingly insulated, are insufficient to finance them. The cost of maintaining our political system in other words exceeds the current receipts from the system making it incapable of planned economic development under the aegis of the state. It is to this contradiction that the author traces the origin of the new turn in economic policy.

Both these papers were presented at the Calcutta meet of economists in October. We are publishing them here in the hope that they would carry forward the discussion around the new economic policy which we have initiated in the pages of this journal over the last few months.

The article by Ranjit Das Gupta on the characteristics of the tribal labour force recruited to work in the coal mines in the early years, raises important theoretical issues going beyond the specific historical context. This labour force, which moved back and forth between the tribal and peasant economy on the one hand and the coal mines on the other, symbolised a complex interaction between the capitalist and the pre-capitalist sectors. The meagre wages and the absence of any insurance against sickness, unemployment and old age, in the capitalist sector, forced the workers into reliance on their pre-capitalist ties for the maintenance and support of their families, the fact that the workers continued to exhibit features of a semi-proletariat was thus a response to a situation of extreme capitalist exploitation, which also evoked considerable resistance from below.

The resistance to the ascendancy of capitalists in Europe in the entire period spanning the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century provided the milieu within which the creativity of Francisco Goya, the Spanish painter, unfolded itself. A N. Anwer's piece on Goya, which is inspired by an exhibition of Goya's works held recently in Delhi, locates the creative vision of this rebel genius in the context of the protest against the tyranny of bourgeois "reason" in the period of growing ascendancy of capital.

Finally, we publish a rejoinder by Sanjay Prasad to the communication by Partha Chatterjee, published in *Social Scientist* No. 141. This communication itself was a response to a long review article on *Subaltern Studies II* which *Social Scientist* had carried earlier. Ours has been one of the journals that has taken up for serious and critical examination the work being done by the group of historians who have gathered together to bring out *Subaltern Studies*. We are glad to carry this discussion forward.

ASHOK MITRA

Resource Mobilisation And Devolution

ON THE face of it, resources for growth should not, at the present juncture, be wanting in the Indian system. Savings, according to data vetted by the Union government, have currently reached close to 25 per cent of national income. This is not an inconsiderable achievement, particularly in the context of the per capita income level in the country. Something must be at fault if, none the less, public savings are claimed to be in short supply, so much so that important projects have decided to be cut back. The only possible inferences are that (a) a relatively larger proportion of aggregate savings is being allowed to be channelled towards financing private investment, and (b) even within the public sector, a larger proportion of the available resources is being diverted for defence, para-military outlays and capital formation for non-growth purposes.

The most glaring evidence of (a) is provided by the contents of the Union budget for 1985-86. Extensive lowering of the direct tax burden has been announced for the corporate sector and individuals belonging to the upper income brackets. Realised—and not just realisable—savings have thus been allowed to be retained by the private sector, thereby sacrificing the prospect of additional public outlays. The question therefore is not one of availability of savings for public investments, but of the will to pursue such investments. One can certainly discuss—as it is our intention to do so subsequently—measures for generating additional public savings from hitherto untapped sources. But the rationale of choking off the flow of savings from sources which were being tapped in the past should also constitute a part of the agenda for discussion.

This is a crucial issue. For it involves the question of the philosophical format of planning. Do we continue to adhere to the original ideological underpinning of our planning effort, to wit, that the State will be the leading sector, both coordinating the mobilisation and deployment of resources as well as monitoring the impact of other policy measures on growth? If the decision is otherwise, the intention is to switch over to an alternative framework of economic policies, and the task of stimulating the processes of growth delegated to private individuals and institutions, countrymen should be told so. What seems inadmissible is an attempt to shift the onus of a dwindle-

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ding rate of public capital formation on the alleged scarcity of public savings, since it is obvious that public savings are shrinking because of a deliberate decision arrived at on a different plane to throttle these savings. You yourself have the cast to die, it would be sheer dissembling if you now express dissatisfaction over the mould of the die.

There is another, and equally basic point. In case the economic philosophy which informed our planning has meanwhile been discarded and supplanted by a new one, the question can be legitimately raised: discarded by whom and supplanted by whose authority? The National Development Council has not met for quite some while, there was no hint of any change in overall policy at that last meeting of the Council. Nor can it even be claimed that the ruling party, when it fought and won the parliamentary elections in December 1984, had sought a mandate for such changes. Accountability for whatever is taking place should be explicitly rendered. Some of the proposed changes are without question in conflict with the Directive Principles of State Policy laid down in the Constitution.

We now come to (b). Two examples should suffice. The first concerns the mammoth stockpile of foodgrains, currently in the neighbourhood of 30 million tonnes. Does it serve much social purpose to have capital formation in the form of stocks of this order? It does not even appear that the objective is contracyclical food budgeting of any species, the stockpile is guided more by the necessity to placate certain segments of the affluent peasantry. The practice hitherto followed may also be related to adoption of a relatively capital-land intensive technology, leading to inadequate employment generation in agriculture and also inadequate effective demand. It should be possible to transform proportion of the existing stock of grains into capital formation for growth: all that the authorities have to do is to allow the grains to be used for purposes of rural development projects such as erstwhile food-for-work programmes. The returns would be visible in the form of new roads, bridges, wells, embankments, etc., in the countryside, all contributing towards improved farm production and productivity. Unlike the stockpile of foodgrains, this kind of public investment would be altogether non-inflationary—and could even be counterinflationary. There can be no greater commentary on the drift of official thinking than the fact that the allocation for rural development projects in the Union budget for 1985-86 has actually been scaled down from what it was in 1984-85.

Our second instance concerns defence spending. We are victims of the sacred cow syndrome here. In the surcharged atmosphere prevailing in the country, anyone suggesting a closer scrutiny of what goes on in the name of defence expenditure is immediately suspected of a lack of patriotism, or even worse. Particularly since 1980, defence outlay has assumed a runaway character and is at present claiming nearly 20 per cent of the Union government's budget and more than 5 per cent of the gross domestic product. Can we afford such an order of expenditure, and do we need it? Both questions are relevant, and have to be answered.

True, this is a delicate area. Politicians of all hues and members of Parlia-

ment have tended to adopt the kid-glove approach towards defence spending, discussions in Parliament on the defence budget are of a general nature and barely touch the aspect of cost-effectiveness of what is being spent in the name of defence. There is little analysis in any quarter on the opportunity cost of defence expenditure and on whether what is sought to be achieved through an alternative set of policies and measures, which might carry a much lower price tag. Nor has much effort gone in to weigh the implications of defence expenditure for regional income distribution, or of the potential loss of employment opportunities because of sizeable import leakages from such expenditure. And of course there is the barest scrutiny of defence accounts to ensure the prevention of corruption and unconscionable leakages, in the given milieu of hush-hush, the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General cannot but move gingerly while scrutinising these accounts, and many substantial camel's heads nonchalantly slip through the eye of the needle. In any event, ever since 1972-73, little has been heard from the direction of the office of the Auditor and Comptroller General on even procedural and other run-of-the-mill irregularities in expenditures undertaken by the Union government and its agencies. Most of the critical gaze has been concentrated on the supposed waywardness of individual State governments in respect of financial administration—this is acknowledged safe territory.

And yet, for a poor country like ours, so desperately short of resources, the issue is much too important to be pushed under the carpet for any length of time. Even in the United States, and as early as in 1960, President Eisenhower, despite he himself having a most distinguished past in the army, was constrained to strike a note of warning against the spreading tentacles of a 'military-industrial' complex, which distorted national priorities, encouraged corruption, drained away precious resources and generally vitiated the social, political and economic milieu. Are we at all confident that a similar malady has not already begun to afflict the Indian environment? The scope for emotional blackmail is great here, and there are enough indications that it is being exploited to the hilt. Defence contracts have proliferated to an enormous extent in the course of the past decade or thereabouts, the regime of lobbyists and commission agents is an established reality, one cannot be altogether too sure that some of the contracts being placed abroad do not bear the imprimatur of particular influences and have little to do with genuine national needs. The possibility therefore exists both of capital outlays taking place in the area of defence that are not strictly called for in terms of national priorities and of leakages from outlays even when they conform to the test of such priorities. The time has certainly come to set up a framework of evaluation, scrutiny and accounting of defence expenditure which would enable an objective review of the costs and benefits involved. If, as a consequence, sizeable savings are located in the public sector, such savings could be fruitfully deployed to accelerate the pace of capital formation for development.

This may be a convenient point to pass on to a discussion of additional, and non-inflationary, sources of resource-raising. This is also where we could

bring in some of the issues involved in the debate over resource devolution from the Union to the States. Given the provisions of the Constitution and the complexities which have clouded the polity in the recent period, it would be a gross miscalculation to assume that the task of resource-gathering in India could be compartmentalised and the Centre and the States could proceed in their respective spheres without taking into account the mutuality of the impact of their policies and decisions. It would be equally dangerous to pretend that the issue of resource-gathering could be separated from that of resource-sharing. A little acknowledgement of the reciprocity of relationships between the Union and the State governments can not only reduce tension, it may also make the task of resource-raising for development that much less difficult. If decentralisation in resource-raising can be combined with a corresponding decentralisation of the benefits of devolution, the cost of resource-raising may in fact fall, and the total quantum of resources raised may at the same time increase.

Let us, for instance, consider the case of direct taxes. With the exception of imposts on agricultural land and earnings from it, the entire area of direct taxes—including income and corporation taxes—comes under the purview of the Centre. Finance Commissions have however faithfully adhered to the implied directive in the Constitution that a sizeable proportion of the proceeds from income tax levied by the Centre should be transferred to the States. In recent years, as much as 85 per cent of the yield from income tax has devolved to the States. Class predilections apart, perhaps this factor too has tempted the Centre to lower the rates of income tax year after year. Little thought has been given to the consideration that, in the process, it is a part of overall public resources that is being given up. The Centre has also kept refusing to share the proceeds from the surcharge on income tax with the States or to bring the proceeds from the corporation tax within the divisible pool. And it has felt very much within its constitutional rights to do whatever it has felt like doing with respect to expenditure tax, gift tax, wealth tax and estate duties.

This touching sense of attachment to the letter of the Constitution has not however prevented the Centre from trying to butt into spheres of taxation which juridically belong to the States. Since class issues have ordained that direct taxes are to be avoided as an instrument of resource-raising, the Centre has continued to depend upon a widening range of indirect imposts and has also been particularly anxious to encroach upon areas reserved by the Constitution for the States. The prerogative of the States to levy sales taxes on sugar, textiles and tobacco and tobacco products was impinged upon by a stratagem pushed through in the late 1950s, a scheme of additional excise duties, totally within the purview of the Centre, was introduced with respect to these three commodities, and attempts are on to enlarge the scope of additional excise duties by covering a fresh list of items, thus further narrowing the scope of State sales taxes. Without the leave of the States, the Centre had set up a committee to review the structure of indirect taxes, most of its recommendations were intended to erode the resource-raising capability of

the States. The State governments are subjected to a continuous barrage of pressure from Central ministries to grant sales tax concessions to this or that interest group, in most such cases, though, the Centre itself is reluctant to accord analogous concessions in excise duties.

It is a piquant situation—the Centre feels free to interfere into the spheres of resource-raising which, according to the Constitution, are the prerogative of the States, but is not willing to listen to the counsel of the States on matters which, while formally belonging to the Central list, deeply affect the interest of the States. The nation would surely be better served if such fiscal issues could, for instance, be referred to a National Fiscal Council, with adequate representation from the Centre as well as the States. The Council could review the overall fiscal needs of the nation, assess separately the resource requirements of the Centre and the States, and broadly indicate the distribution of the burden of additional revenue-raising between the various categories of direct and indirect taxes. The prerogative of Parliament and the State legislature in their respective spheres of fiscal responsibility need not be disturbed, but this responsibility could be harmonised with certain limits of feasibility mutually agreed upon. As a result, the Centre would be better informed of the position of the States, and the States too would learn to take a sympathetic view of the problems the Centre might be facing in any particular situation.

Just as such a Council should be in a position to persuade the Centre to review from time to time its decisions with respect to income tax, corporation tax, wealth tax, estate duties, etc., it may similarly be able to coax the States to take a closer look at the problem of taxing agricultural holdings and agricultural incomes. This is one area of direct taxation where the responsibility devolves squarely on the State governments, but where effective measures have been sadly lacking. Among the States only West Bengal has passed a progressive land holdings tax, even in that State, meaningful follow-up on the legislation is yet to take place. Once the Centre makes some gestures concerning income and corporation taxes which directly benefit the States, the latter too would conceivably reciprocate by agreeing to introduce a progressive, resource-yielding framework of agricultural income taxation and by agreeing to re-assess the series of decisions undertaken during the past four decades as a consequence of which the net yield from land revenue has been reduced to insignificance. Similar persuasion could be productively applied to raise the yield from irrigation rates and betterment levies. The class factors which inhibit resource-raising in these areas cannot of course be wished away, but decisions collectively arrived at would be difficult to flout.

‘This kind of collective counselling should also help to resolve the impasse in, for example, the introduction of necessary Central legislation in terms of Article 269 of the Constitution for bringing inter-State consignment transfers within the orbit of taxation. Despite a unanimous accord reached at a conference of chief ministers—an accord which had the approval of the Ministry of Finance too—on the modalities of the proposed tax measure, it is

yet to be moved in Parliament, and revenue worth as much as Rs 1,000 crores is therefore being annually denied to the public sector

There are other obvious areas of additional revenue-raising which could be placed for the scrutiny of the National Fiscal Council. The States are currently prevented from levying any tax on media advertisements, once more, an enabling Central legislation under Article 269 is called for. At the same time, the Centre has now removed the ceiling on allowable expenditure on advertising on the part of corporate bodies, so, for the present, the scope of collecting revenue from this source has altogether disappeared. In the over-all, it is resource-gathering in the public sector which has taken a beating. Moral persuasion applied at a collective forum may prove effective in preventing leakages of this nature. Examples in fact abound where, with some collective counselling, erosion of public resources could be plugged and new areas of resource-raising opened up. Articles 268 and 269 offer a vast mine ready for exploitation.

The potential of additional resource-gathering through the operation of public enterprises run under the auspices of both the Centre and the States needs to be discussed. Here again, one particular matter has caused particular strain in recent years in the relationship between the Centre and the States. A major part of the production, import and distribution of key commodities such as petroleum products, iron and steel, coal, cement, etc., is controlled by undertakings owned by the Union government, it has therefore been relatively easy for it to raise substantial sums of money by raising the prices of these commodities through administrative directives. Such across-the-board increase in the prices of basic articles has a ratchet effect on the general price level, the States have argued—and legitimately—that since they have to bear a large part of the consequence of any inflationary spurt, they should be accorded the courtesy of prior consultation before decisions are announced in these matters. They have a further, and stronger, grievance. In the past, when the Union government would decide to collect additional resources by raising the prices of commodities such as coal or steel or petroleum products, it would choose the *deus ex machina* of increasing the rates of excise duties, since 40 per cent of the proceeds of such duties goes to the States in terms of the recommendations of the Finance Commission, they too would therefore benefit from the decision. Perhaps to deny the States this collateral gain, the Centre, in order to collect additional revenue, has of late tended to rely exclusively on the modality of raising administered prices rather than raising excise duties, and has claimed that it is under no constitutional or legal obligation to share the consequential additional resources with the States. It is important that this controversy is satisfactorily resolved. Once a total view is taken of the respective resource needs and obligations of the Centre and the States, the devolution of resources ought to follow therefrom. What proportion of the needed additional resources is to be raised through adjustments respectively in excise duties and in administered prices should then cease to be a matter of unseemly bickering.

A broader question however remains. How should prices of 'public'—or

'near-public'-goods and services be pushed in order to raise resources for growth ? Are not the hazards of rampant price inflation as great here as in the case of deficit financing ? Would not a mechanistic application of the so-called 'cost plus' formula encourage laxity and inefficiency ? Should not the endeavour be to increase the cost effectiveness of public undertakings and thereby generate surplus rather than increase the prices of their products ?

Since the issue is the garnering of surplus from public units, it is relevant to refer here to the controversy over the relative efficiency of enterprises in the public and private sectors. The attitudinal bias of the media apart, the fact remains that few private units are subject to the kind of constant surveillance, in legislatures and outside, which is the fate of public enterprises. Units in the public sector, such as those generating electricity and fertilisers, were often enjoined in the past by official policy to sell their products at below cost, the policy persists in many areas. On quite a few occasions, the major beneficiaries have been privately-owned industrial or commercial undertakings, whose profits thus have been at least partly at the cost of public sector units. The frequency with which units in the private sector fall 'sick', and their owners walk away without bothering about their social responsibilities concerning such 'sick' units, would also cast doubt about the inherent superiority of private management trumpeted in many quarters. Data, fairly carefully sifted, suggest that in the case of a preponderant number of units which had grown sick and were subsequently taken over by either the Union or the State governments, the cause of industrial sickness was either proprietorial irresponsibility or managerial incompetence.

Two additional points are perhaps worth making in the context of the on-going debate. Wherever feasible, operational costs should of course be brought down. It would however be useful to prepare a check list of units which continue with the practice of selling their products or services at below cost, and decide whether this list could not be drastically shortened. Even in cases where social sanction exists for subsidising sales, there should be scope for dual pricing of the product or service offered for sale. Small units may continue to enjoy the benefit of receiving a subsidised input, but the public undertaking concerned may attempt to recover the full cost of this subsidy through the prices charged from large-scale units.

The second point is in regard to the wide array of public enterprises engaged in the production of 'public goods'. Many of these units are run by the State governments. The admonitions that generally apply to public undertakings should also equally apply to those of them which belong to the State governments. Certainly, exemplifying the spoils system, there is a tendency at the level of State governments for a proliferation of public enterprises and for induction of employees not strictly necessary for efficiency of operations. All this should be discouraged. It may nonetheless not always be possible to convert the public transport system, for instance, into a profitable operation or to charge some sections of farmers the full cost for water supplied to them from the irrigation channels. Here too, the scope for charging

differential prices to different sections of customers should be closely examined. It would however be unrealistic to assume that subsidies of all species could be straightaway eliminated. What should be the specific target of attack are the mindless subsidies—or those ‘mindful’ ones whose purpose is to help, on the sly, such categories or classes as want to take the State for a ride.

In the final analysis, the issue of resource mobilisation is inextricably linked with that of resource devolution. It is not altogether uncommon these days that not even a quarter of the total resources raised in a particular State flows back to that State as public outlay in some form or other. It is of marginal help here to argue that this is as it should be, since resources are being diverted from the economically stronger States to the economically weaker ones, from those who can afford to spare to those who are in need of resources. Things, analysed data indicate, have not quite worked out that way: the weaker States have not been the major beneficiaries of resources transferred from the relatively better off States. It is the Centre which has gained the most from these transfers, along with a sprinkling of States which do not however belong to the bottom of the economic scale, but who, for various extra-economic reasons, have been showered with bounty by the Centre.

The issue which has now emerged in a most vocal form concerns the relative gains and losses of an over-centralised economic system compared to one which permits a relatively wide measure of devolution. The draft of the Seventh Five Year Plan, it could thus be argued, marks a retrogression, since the relative allocation of the public sector outlay between the Centre and the State has receded to the region of 55:45 in favour of the Centre as against the equal allocation in the Sixth Plan. The nation has experimented with a centralised model of resource control and economic decision-making for the last three and a half decades. Whether this has succeeded in lifting the economy to an optimum path of growth, featured by balanced regional development and elimination of the more glaring social inequalities, is the central question. And the danger always remains of the system totally breaking down in case both resources and benefits maintain a unidirectional flow.

To suggest that all such issues have already been referred to the Commission on Centre-State relations and that its recommendations should be awaited is not helpful either at this juncture. The Union government did not bother to consult the Commission before it took the unprecedented decision to block the recommendations of the Eighth Finance Commission for 1984-85, thus depriving the States, once and for all, the use of resources of the order of Rs. 1,500 crores. It has continued to take a rigid view in the matter of the States' overdrafts from Reserve Bank of India, while turning a Nelson's eye on the overdrafts from commercial banks indulged in by some State governments politically aligned to it, running huge deficits on its own account with the nation's central bank and at the same time giving up major revenue sources. Unless these imbalances in attitudes and decisions are taken care of, the fiscal edifice would indeed continue to be in great peril.

AMAL SANYAL*

The New Economic Policy An Overview

WITH THE announcement, in quick succession, of the Railway Budget, the Finance Bill, the Import and Export Policy, the Electronics and the Textiles Policy and a host of procedural changes at the departmental level, the contours of an economic policy of the Union Government have emerged which are radically different from what we have had in this country so far. The new policy however had been taking shape over the last few years—its character clearly discernible in the successive trade policy statements, alteration in the licensing procedures, change in the Credit Authorisation Scheme, a series of revisions in the position of RBI regarding deposits and investment by the NRIs and a number of other procedural changes made during the last few years. The terms of reference for the appointment of the M. Narasimhan Committee were a clear indication of these changes and the Central Advisory Council on Trade had also made a plea for these changes in January 1984. Thus, the recent changes should not be looked upon as a dramatic turn around in economic policy steered by a new ruling group in its wisdom or folly or naivete, but seem to be the outcome of a process with a longer history.

For the same reason it appears that assessing the new policy in its economic terms, say as a reliance on a path of consumption-led growth must come later and in the context of an appreciation of this protracted process that has led to it. I have tried to analyse this process elsewhere,¹ and here I may just mention its bare outline only to bear upon the subsequent discussion. The causal element in this process has been the absence of overwhelming superiority of either industrial capital or the landed interests over our society, at the time of independence. Just as this had led the Indian National Congress during the days of the nationalist movement to keep these forces skilfully balanced, in the same fashion, the national government after independence had to continue this balancing and arbitration in relation to important economic issues.

The first distributive rule of the resulting system of coalition of the proprietor classes mediated by politicians and the government machinery is that resource mobilisation from the groups in this coalition must be kept within

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narrow limits, let alone taking recourse to confiscatory measures. This had fore-closed such institutional reforms as land-reform or a serious exercise at preventing business concentration—measure that could improve the productivity of our economic system and therefore, the flow of resources to the government.

The second rule of this managed coalition is that the state of near balance among the constituents must be preserved, so that the coalition itself and the attendant political system do not break up. In an environment where the overall rate of growth of production is low, the arbitration between proprietors could not be done through legislative and administrative concessions alone. More often the concessions to these groups had to take the form of institutionalizing regular transfer to these groups from the union budget. The long list of a wide range of subsidies to the property-owning classes that are now found listed in the current disbursements in the budget has grown over time. The rule that parity be preserved among the coalition partners meant in this case that a grant of profit to one group has to be quickly matched by one to another group. This has inevitably led to a cumulation of transfer claims on the union budget over the years. The extent of the problem will be clear from the fact that currently transfer expenses form no less than 40 per cent of total annual expenditure of the union government, having risen steadily from around 25 per cent from the time of the first Five Year Plan.²

Associated with the process of managing the coalition of the proprietors there has been another development of immense significance, namely the proliferation of the government's administrative departments—offices and office staff—throughout the length and breadth of the country. This development was necessary for establishing and then strengthening a network of institutions for routine arbitration by the government, but in the process it has multiplied the cost of governance several times. The growth of this cost was most conspicuous during the period covered under the second Five Year Plan to the period under the fifth Five Year Plan, when the government's consumption expenditure rose on an average by more than 20 per cent per annum at current prices. The rate of growth has since fallen off, and government's consumption expenditure in the eighties has remained at around 20 per cent of its total annual expenditure.

While the new class of government servants, particularly the upper income strata of it, is indispensable for the government given the political set-up related above, the cost of maintaining it together with the cost of running their offices is a major commitment of the union budget. If we add the transfer to proprietor classes in the power coalition per year to the consumption expenditure of the government, it more than exhausts the current receipts of the government.³ This is remarkable, since it implies that the current cost of maintaining our political system is more than the current receipts of the system—a fact which is contrary to what we expect of an economy with a planned development strategy. The political system on which our economy is built has thus reached a stage where it is incapable of

generating a surplus from its current account which would generate planned economic growth with the public sector at the apex. Whatever little planned economic growth we had so far, then, must go if the political system is to be maintained. The idea we are trying to convey is not so much that our political system is in philosophical opposition to a system of planned economic development, so that by choice it is now moving away from the latter, but that its own mechanism leads it into a stage when it becomes *incapable* of planned economic growth under State supervision.

However, the growth of the national product is nevertheless necessary. As the claims of the rich in the industrial and the agricultural sector and the better off employees of the tertiary sector mount, unless the size of the national product is also increasing at that rate, it would result in a continuous inroad into the level of living of the millions outside the coalition. This has to be arrested, or else the political system faces a bigger threat—not from within the coalition—but from outside it. The government and the men in power must, therefore, continue to seek a certain rate of growth of the national product, and if the government is to play any role in this process such role must entirely come through borrowing including borrowing from the Central Bank as its major component.

A process of growth initiated by public investment through large-scale borrowing and deficit financing has very severe limitations in a society where the modal living conditions are at the subsistence level. Prabhat Patnaik has recently analysed these limitations,⁵ and we need not repeat those arguments here. It may be just noted in passing that a deficit of the government must expost equal the surplus of the private sector (i.e. in a closed economy). Thus, a larger public deficit will force a large private surplus, and under conditions of infrastructural bottlenecks to expansion of output and oligopolistic restrictions to entry into production, this is mostly achieved through a change in income distribution rather than of output. Income redistribution takes the form of inflation which further restricts the speed of output adjustment through speculative activities. Thus, a trend path where government deficit is growing would result in a trend of deteriorating income distribution. Coming back to our discussion, we should recall that the purpose for which public investment was examined was to see if it can arrest the tendency of the income distribution to worsen. A system of deficit based public expansion program, if it is prolonged over the medium to long run, resulting in a further worsening of the distribution of income will achieve precisely what it was proposed to stop.

Thus, the government and the men in power, while they must continue to seek a certain rate of growth of the national product, have no options other than wishing that it comes through private initiative. This is the only reason that would explain that the same social class of advisers to the government who owed their seat in the government as well as their opulence to the growth of the planned economy, the public sector and the socialistic pattern, now must speak against it and in favour of a new era relying on private initiative. It is to save their own social existence, to save the coalition from splitting up

from within and from revolutionary attack from outside that they think it fit to now reverse their policy

II

If the strategy thrust of the new policy is to rely on private initiative, the specific tactics of this strategy appears to be an economic expansion based on the demand of the classes and groups in the power coalition mentioned above. Since the politics of the system would any way ensure the continuing enrichment of these groups, it does not tax the ingenuity of the policy maker to devise such a tactics within the overall compulsion of the strategy of depending on private initiative

Of course in a market, system sale of goods has to be confined to those who can buy and therefore characterising a market tactics by saying that it sells to the upper income group, does not add much insight. The thrust of the new policy is not that the sales *ex-post* will be concentrated on the richer sections, but that the government, as a matter of conscious policy now wants to nurse this segment of the market and provide inducement for the movement of capital, enterprise, material and foreign exchange to satisfy the demand of this market segment. Additionally, since private investment is to provide the only stimulus for growth in the system, inducement must be created for private investment to create additional capacity in the areas that the rich will demand, and the areas of derived demand

The demand side of this problem is not difficult to tackle, it requires a series of continuous concessions to the rich to keep their demand for consumables buoyant. It has been suggested and toyed with in some states¹ in the past, and in any case it comes as a matter of course as a fall out of the political system

It is the supply side of the political system which requires more attention. On the supply-side, Indian industries come up against a barrier imposed by our own history of development. Our erstwhile industrial policy, the definition of schedules, the attendant licensing philosophy and the implicit ranking of priorities as revealed in the Import and Export policy of the government are based on an entirely different perception. Private sector consumer goods industry had developed so as to cater to a group of consumers whose tastes were defined by the social customs, habits and cultural prejudice of a middle class that had seen the Second World War, the Independence Movement, and the partition of the subcontinent. The affluent consumers of the eighties is a sociologically different generation with a different outlook and taste and certainly very little prejudice about consumption, particularly luxury and durable consumption as compared to the earlier generations. If private industry is to be the main plank of our income generation and growth, then its product-mix has to drastically change

Likewise the private industry in the intermediate and the capital goods sector, again by virtue of our erstwhile development philosophy, is geared to the demand from the basic and infrastructural industries in the public sector. If again the private sector is to become the main plank for domestic capital

formation its structure has to change and is to be geared to the needs of the new consumer goods sector that is to emerge

Together, these considerations suggest that if private sector is to provide both employment and growth, then the structure of Indian industries is to change all the way from the consumer goods industry through the intermediate goods to capital goods sector. It is easy to argue that the new economic policy is but a concerted attempt at this restructuring.

The concessions in income and wealth taxes and the estate duty, the abolition of the compulsory deposit scheme and the continuing reluctance to tax agricultural affluence are directly aimed at nursing the demand side of the market. So is the reduction in the indirect taxes on a range of consumer durables, essentially aimed, as they are, at reducing their price. It may be noted in this connection that all indirect tax benefits in this year's budget have gone to either durable or luxury consumer goods or to capital and intermediate goods. While the benefits of tax reduction on the luxury and durable consumables have been passed on to the consumers, in the case of others they have been either wholly or mostly absorbed by producers.

Just as the demand side of the market has been sought to be boosted by fiscal concessions, on this supply side the intention has been to boost overall profitability through various concessions. The concessions on the corporation tax, expansion of the O G L list to include as many as 201 new items of industrial machinery, the redefinition of the MRTP limits, the reduction of custom duty on the producer goods, including, very conspicuously the 'Project Imports'—are all indications of the government's attempt to boost private profitability. By increasing the overall profitability of production and providing buyer's incentive in particular markets, it is hoped that private resources will flow into these markets, to produce a boom condition. On top of these attempts at increasing overall profitability, specific inducements have been showered on particular sectors, which in the government's perception are to act as the foci of the consumption led boom.

The delicensing of as many as 25 areas of industrial production, the broad-banding in licensing, automatic reendorsement of capacity increase in other cases to the extent of the recent peak level of output, opening out telecommunications to the private sector and similar moves can be seen as measures by which private production structure can be altered quickly without waiting for such alteration to work out over time following the market signals.

So far as the funding of private investment goes, it is hoped that the boost in profitability will lead the private sector to find its own ways of funding. The cut in public sector allocations itself will, it is hoped, release some resources. To complement all this, the government is also trying to work out an integrated policy for inducing the NRI participation in this scheme of things. The successive changes in the last two years in the rules relating to the NRI investment and deposits notwithstanding, a high-powered committee in the government is currently reviewing the entire gamut of regulations that relate the NRI activities with the RBI, the commercial banks and the Com-

pany Law Board. Some of the suggestions of the visiting delegation of the NRIs to India that seem to have been sympathetically received are to relax the one year restriction on NRI portfolio investment, and that they be allowed to sell their shares any time after purchase. Even though at present only 11 companies have reached the ceiling of 5 per cent NRI shareholding, a suggestion to raise this ceiling seems to be also under consideration. A rather colourful epitome of the government's NRI policy would be, if, as suggested by the leaders of this visiting delegation, the Andamans are now given to the NRIs to adopt and develop into a free port styled after Hong Kong.

It is another matter however, if in the new strategy it turns out in the end that funds are rather superfluous and the constraints on development come from elsewhere.

III

A detailed evaluation of the new policy is left out of the scope of my paper. I will conclude by making an observation about the method of this evaluation.

To proceed, we must begin by noting that even though the new set of policies is being labeled by the government as well as by some critics as liberalisation, in reality it is monitoring and intervention continued out with a very different objective compared to our earlier regimes. The only way that one can label the present set of policies as liberalisation is by perhaps suggesting that the government in its wisdom is prescient of the nature of our product-mix, resource flows and the relative prices that would actually prevail in the absence of all extra-market interventions and then escorts the economy by intervention, inducement and persuasion towards this equilibrium structure. I am not stating this with a semantic indifference to the substance of things, but I believe that a system of genuine liberalisation based on market forces cannot take the form of boosting sectional demand through partisan fiscalism, or influence the direction resource flows by making selective concessions of various kinds, while withholding such benefits from other sections. A genuine liberalisation should have, for example, allowed the public corporations like NTPC to raise resources for themselves through market borrowing and to go ahead with their expansion schemes as large private sector corporations would have done in a time of resource crunch.

Also it must be realised that the new policy is the final result of the continuous improvement of the position of the rural and the urban rich. The latter include the richer section of the government servants, the policy making bureaucracy and the intelligentsia, too, who are to be the patrons for a wide range of new consumer goods, and are to set the standard of consumerism in the cities to be followed by the affluent people in the towns and the countryside. The new policy certainly is not aimed at dismembering these strata—rather its aim is to protect and nourish them. This implies that the new policy is not aimed at dismantling the bureaucratic monitoring of our economic life. It is another matter if currently the monitoring is aimed at simulating

what the government advisers believe would be our equilibrium configuration if there were no such monitoring. Just as our socialistic pattern was far from socialism, so is our liberalisation far from a system of free markets.

The reason for making this point is the following. The new policy is often seeking justification in its claim of cutting out all the bureaucracy, red tape and corruption associated with our system of controls. If the new policy keeps the entire structure of intervention, overseeing and monitoring in tact and only replaces a set of priorities by another, then such claims need be taken only lightly. Its evaluation then must come from a strict comparison between the economic strategy of planned development with the public sector at the apex and a strategy of development with reliance on the demand from the rich, and the consequent derived demand. It is true that our planned economy was beset with the problems of bureaucracy and corruption, and it will remain equally true of our new economy that makes private consumption and initiative as the cornerstone. So, I suppose a relative evaluation of the two strategies should be undertaken strictly on the strength of their economic merits and viability, short of all rhetoric about corruption, efficiency, bureaucratic hurdles and the red tape.

Once this is said, I believe the task is done, for we have debated in this country and elsewhere the relative merits of a course of planned development and one which relies on private initiative alone.

- 1 See Amal Sanyal "Accumulating changes in the nature of controls in the Indian Economy" *Social Scientist*, May 1984, pp 33-42
- 2 See the *Economic Survey* 1984-85 Ministry of Finance, Government of India, pp 128-129
- 3 The source for this statement is the *Union Budget*, Govt. of India, relevant years
- 4 *The Union Budget*, Govt. of India, nos since '79-'80 Also *Economic Survey* Govt of India 1984-85
- 5 Prabhat Patnaik "Market Question and Capitalist Development in India" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, August 1984, pp 1251-1260
- 6 See for example a statement by Mr Siddharta Sankar Ray, ex-Chief Minister, West Bengal, reported in *Indian Express*, January 23, 1976, also referred to by K N Raj "Growth and Stagnation in Indian Industrial Development", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual No 1976

RANAJIT DAS GUPTA*

*Migrants in Coal Mines : Peasants
or Proletarians, 1850s-1947*

THIS PAPER describes and examines some of the problems associated with the formation and growth of a mining labour force in the Bengal and Bihar coal fields of Raniganj, Jharia and Giridih, the former being located in Burdwan and the other two in Manbhum and Hazaribagh districts respectively, and some implications of these problems

Rural Nexus

The mines in both Bengal and Bihar came to be located in remote, formerly jungle areas inhabited by tribal and semi-tribal populations and low-caste Hindus engaged in a somewhat crude form of agriculture and also partly dependent on the gathering of forest produce¹ In the early years virtually the entire mining labour force was composed of tribal and low-caste peasant and artisan groups. From the earliest days of mining, labourers were drawn from villages either within the two coal bearing districts or neighbouring districts Till 1921 the overwhelming majority of the mine labour force consisted of local people or at most short-distant migrants² In later years too there was no substantial change³ Given the locational background, all of them were close to the soil. Even those who later on came to be recruited from relatively distant U P, C P and Bihar districts came from rural areas This pattern did not undergo any significant shift by the close of our period The 1944 Labour Investigation Committee noted.

“The essential aspects of the composition of the labour force in coal mines in India have remained the same during the last half a century or so, namely that the labour employed in the different coalfields mostly belongs to the surrounding villages and districts of the province in which the coal mines are situated”.⁴

In addition, despite the growth of the mining labour force stretching over several decades, even at the end of the period under study a settled, full-time labour force having no substantial links with rural economy failed to emerge With regard to the jute mill labour force, it has been noted that the preponderantly male migration and the imbalance in sex and age composition of the mill area population had been important indicators of, as well as factors contributing towards the survival of rural links But the converse, i.e.,

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balance in sex-ratio and in age composition does not necessarily indicate the growth of a settled, stabilized industrial work force cut off from pre-capitalist agriculture and other subsistence activities

The mine labour force that evolved in the Bengal-Bihar coalfields provides a graphic illustration of such a case. In the classic case of the coal mine industry in nineteenth century Britain women and children formed a substantial proportion of the labour force. In the Indian mining labour force too till late 1920s women and, to a lesser extent, children constituted important elements⁵ (Children were prohibited from underground work in 1923 and women in 1929). Ever since the beginning of the colliery industry the mine workers—overwhelmingly Santals, Bauris and other so-called aboriginal groups—used to work in family groups consisting of husband, wife and children.⁶ While the adult males or miners proper cut the coal at the pit face, women and children loaded it into baskets or tubs and carried it to the shaft bottom. Women were employed in a variety of work on the surface too. Available data show that in early 1920s women constituted around a third of the total mine workers.

Yet the mine workers had close connections with the rural economy and society and they continued to have such connections till the end of our period or even thereafter. Throughout the period it was a most common practice on the part of the mine workers to leave the mines for work on the land for several weeks at a stretch particularly in the two major agricultural seasons of sowing and transplanting in June and July and harvesting in November and December, and it was found that the supply of labour closely depended on the agricultural cycle. An exodus took place also in the marriage season of March and April.

For the sake of convenience of analysis it is possible to speak of four different time periods: 1850-1895, 1895-1920, 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The above remained a common feature for each of the four periods.

a) 1850-1895

Here are some pieces of evidence relating to the earliest years. From one 1846 correspondence it is learnt that there was shortage of labour as people were busy in cutting paddy.⁷ In 1860 it was reported that abundant rice had interfered with labour supply to Bengal Coal Co. mines.⁸ In 1861 a mine manager in the Ranigunge areas informed the Calcutta office

“Owing to the cutting of the paddy crop the full complement of miners have not been at work.”⁹

The miners frequently absented themselves also on the occasion of all kinds of festivals—social as well as religious—usually associated with a rural society.¹⁰ In February 1862 G. F. Lords, Superintendent, Bengal Coal Co., Raniganj, reported that two native festivals during the week and also “numerous native marriages” affected production.¹¹

As mentioned earlier, for many decades mine labour force was not composed predominately of adult males, and till late 1920s mine work was organized on a family basis. Thus withdrawal from mine work and return to

the village home was not prompted by separation from family but to a large extent because of links of one kind or another with agriculture and also because of demands of the tribal social life. There were other important factors too, particularly the need for "gathering a large part of subsistence"¹²

These features continued to prevail in later years too. In the early 1890s M. J. Monahan, the District Magistrate of Burdwan, reported:

"The employers have no hold on their labour, who on any day may come to the mine or stay away as they please. At times, when there is much field labour going on, they stay away very often to attend to their cultivation."¹³

Continuing he said:

"Most of the larger companies have given their miners who reside primarily near the mines, a certain quantity of land free, as an inducement to them to settle. The Bengal Coal Company gave each man one bigha of arable and five cottas of garden land. Other miners have larger holdings of their own, to which they go away for a month or two months at certain seasons, being only temporarily settled at the mines at other times."¹⁴

The mine workers allegedly had also a most irregular and spasmodic pattern of work habit and did not have any discipline with regard to working time. From the early days of the industry it was the miners' practice to come to work with his family from the village, to go underground and work there for a whole day or even two or three days at a stretch and to return to the village after earning the sum that he desired at the particular time.¹⁵

The Labour Enquiry Commission of 1896 reported:

"The Sonthalis and Bauris, like many other people, prefer doing no more work than they are obliged to do, and are only anxious to earn enough to live on."¹⁶

Continuing he said:

"He (the mine worker) gets capital pay, and in a few days can earn enough to keep him and his family idle and let them enjoy themselves thoroughly for a few days. He accordingly takes advantage of Sundays and all possible holidays, and takes a holiday with, or without, an excuse."¹⁷

From this can we speak of these people as 'target workers' who had some sort of clearly defined objective or target,¹⁸ on the attainment of which they went back to their homes? Available evidence tends to suggest that. Though the Commission did not make any explicit mention of the agricultural connection of the mine workers, that there must have been such connection of very close nature can be presumed from other evidence for earlier (noted above) and also later years.

From 1895 to 1920

Though organized mining had begun in the mid-nineteenth century, till around 1895 it was in its infancy, the coal production being not more than three million tons before 1895. But following the substantial stimulus provided by the fast expanding railways, jute and cotton textile mills, engineer

ing and foundries etc , from mid-1890s there was a relatively rapid expansion in the older Bengal fields and also around that time the Jharia fields too were opened. The consequent growing labour requirements led to the two well known enquiries made by Foley and Fremantle with regard to labour supply, amongst others, in Bengal and Bihar fields. In his Report Foley observed that in the Raniganj coalfields

“~ there is always scarcity of labour in the cultivating seasons, especially when the paddy is transplanted in July or August, and again for a shorter time in December, when the paddy is cut, also a good paddy crop means scarcity of labour in coal mines and vice versa”¹⁹

Similar shortage was experienced at the Jharia fields too. Foley reported

“As at Raniganj, the worst time of the year is the season when the paddy is transplanted in July and August and next when the paddy is reaped in December”²⁰

It appears from the Report and also the Inspection Notes that a large body of the miners came from the surrounding villages, stayed in the colliery areas and put in their labour for several days and even several weeks at a stretch and then went back to their villages.²¹

It is not clear whether the miners had land of their own. It appears that most of them were landless agricultural labourers or marginal peasants working on tenanted land, both categories depending partly on wage labour in the mines. Some of them were perhaps settled in the mining area but had close links with agriculture.²²

With regard to the behavioural pattern and work culture of the mine labour, particularly the Santals, Bauris and other tribal/semi-tribal workers, Foley observed

“ they do not care for making anything, beyond what suffices them for the day”.²³

The Manager of the Seebpur and Katras-Jherria Collieries informed Foley that sometimes, for example, when there was a marriage or something else, the miners worked hard

He stated

“Having made what they want the miners then go off for several days. The best class of labourers worked for about three years, e.g., sometimes men from the Santal Parganas came with their families and worked hard, their object being to buy so many bighas of land worth a few thousand rupees. Once they had made this sum they would suddenly disappear”²⁴ Evidently, they behaved like the African ‘target workers’

Like the mine managers of the earlier years Foley also found that festivities of all kinds, a distinctive feature of rural life, were occasions when the mine labourers absented themselves. He reported

“ they also have frequent pujas, and generally make each puja an excuse for several other holidays”²⁵ Mine workers also went off for days together for weddings.²⁶

In the second decade, particularly during the First World War and the years immediately following it there was a rapid expansion of the industry and also of the labour force. It meant the entry of raw hands into the mining labour force on a large scale. How did it affect the miners? For the late 1910s we have considerable evidence of both impressionistic and detailed nature which indicates the persistence, perhaps in an accentuated form, of the work behaviour and culture noted above.

R I Treharne Rees, a reputed British expert, who in 1919 was entrusted by the Government of India to look after various aspects of coal mining in India and make suitable recommendations, reported

"At present the majority of the work people are primarily agriculturists, who treat mining as a secondary occupation and periodically disappear from the collieries to their villages to cultivate their ground, consequently supply of labour is fluctuating"²⁷

The state of agriculture—crop failures and good crops—considerably affected labour supply. It was found that in case of crop failure, some people maintained themselves with the crop they received as cultivators or as owners of the land, for a large part of the year²⁸

The Zamindari system of labour recruitment was evolved to ensure regular labour supply. But its consequence was considered as self-defeating by Government committees and also mine managements. Thus, the Coalfields Committee of 1920 observed

"In many instances where paddy lands have been given, the result has been the opposite of what was desired, the labourers have either given up mining for cultivation, or leased out the lands to others and continued as before"²⁹

It was found that the allotment of land to the miners was not of help either in raising output or in increasing work efficiency.

Expressing the exasperation of the mine managements at the persistence of peasant-like work habits and mental make-up among the mine workers, one mine manager said

"All our efforts should be directed towards obliterating all agricultural ideas out of the miners' heads, it is miners we want, until we have a mining class entirely apart from the agricultural class, our product chart will be like the peaks of the Himalayas. The time spent in cultivating the proposed plots is time lost and should be spent in the mine"³⁰

From the above remarks regarding the results of giving agricultural land to the miners it should not be thought that those who were not given such land were more steady and stable in their work habit. That was not the position. About such workers living in the neighbouring villages, W C Banerjee of the Indian Mining Association said, they "generally come after doing their domestic work and, during cultivation and harvesting season, their work in the fields"³¹

P.C. Tallents, the Census Superintendent for the 1921 Bihar and Orissa

Census, also spoke of the substantial agricultural connections of the mine workers. He quoted the following from one non-specified source.

“For miles around the coal field many of the villagers follow a dual occupation, working in the fields in the seasons of planting and harvesting and cutting coal for the rest of the time”³²

The returns of the Jharia Mines Board of Health showed that in the third-quarter of 1918 the labour population of the Jharia collieries was about 65,000. With the failure of rains in September of that year the number began to rise, in the last quarter of the year—the harvesting months in which labour supply usually declined in a year of normal rains—the labouring population numbered 80,000 and in the first quarter of 1919, when the scarcity was acutely felt, it reached 1,00,000. But with an improvement in the agricultural situation in 1920 frequent complaints were again heard of shortage of labour.³³

It is pertinent to raise here the question: To what extent did labour settle down in the mining area? A committee appointed in 1917 by the Bihar and Orissa Government to enquire into the housing of labourers in the Bihar coal fields³⁴ estimated that only 15 per cent of the colliery labourers in the Jharia fields, mostly Santals, were settled in the sense that they had been provided with land for cultivation and had built their own houses on the collieries. Of the remainder, 75 per cent were found to come for several weeks or months and live in the *dhouras*, while the remaining 15 per cent lived in their own villages within a few miles of the mines and trekked to their work daily or when it suited them. In the older Raniganj field the proportion of settled labour in the above sense was estimated to be higher, about 50 per cent. Of the other half, 90 per cent migrated to the coalfields for several weeks or months and 10 per cent came irregularly from nearby villages.³⁵ But it was noticed that even in the Raniganj field, not to speak of the Jharia field, a class of hereditary piumen divorced from agriculture had not yet come into existence.

In a sense this was not surprising. For with the real beginning of the industry from just around the mid-1890s the labour force in late 1910s was the creation of even less than one generation. But there were other factors of crucial importance too.

In the 1920s

In the 1920s because of recession and stagnation in the industry and the closing down of weaker mines,³⁶ there was a marked fall in the magnitude of average daily employment in the mines. During the decade and, in fact, from the early twentieth century a slow yet steady change in the composition of the labour force was noticeable. While it remained predominantly composed of tribal and semi-tribal and low-caste peasants, non-tribals drawn mainly from certain Bihar, eastern U P and north-eastern Central Provinces districts formed an increasing minority of the labour force.³⁷ With the introduction of relatively modern methods of mining and the tendency towards greater systematization of working hours, this non-tribal, non-local labour, accus-

tomed to the use of explosives, capable of being employed on coal-cutting machines and considered to have greater adaptability, skill and regularity than the tribals was being preferred by the employers.³⁸ Did these changes, particularly the changing composition, give greater stability and more industrial character to the labour force? On the occasion of the enquiry conducted by the RCLI, voluminous evidence pertaining to the 1920s was collected. It is, however, not possible here to go into the details. But the RCLI *Report* itself presents the overall position that prevailed at the close of the decade.

Virtually repeating what was said by the 1896 LEC with regard to absenteeism and irregularity in attendance, the RCLI stated:

"Whatever the cause, few miners work six days a week and few mines have hitherto been able to count on the punctual attendance of their work, even on those days when they present themselves for work. The mines do not work on Sunday. On Monday very few miners put in an appearance, many are still absent on Tuesday and it is not till Wednesday that a good attendance is secured. Reasonable estimates indicate an average of 4 to 4½ days per week for the individual miner during the week he is at work."³⁹

It was, however, found that an increasing proportion of the labour force was tending to settle down within the coalfield area. In the late 1920s some mine managers, especially those in charge of old established mines, reported a much higher percentage of settled labour than that found in 1917. In Lodna 65 per cent, Loyabad 50 per cent, Standard colliery 75 and Bhuggut-dih 25 per cent of the labour was estimated to have settled. In a few collieries some workers were found to have belonged to second or even third generations. Generally speaking, skilled workers whose proportion had been increasing were more regular in their employment than the unskilled labour and their average duration of employment amounted to several years.⁴⁰ It should, however, be mentioned that the sense in which colliery labour was regarded as settled was much wider than the sense in which jute labour was considered so.⁴¹ In collieries labour was viewed as settled only if it worked fairly regularly and paid one or two visits to its home.⁴² Though the RCLI observed that the proportion of labour so settled was higher in the Raniganj field than in the Jharia field, it is not clear whether it was higher than what it was in 1917.⁴³

But even those workers settled in the wider sense were not totally separated from land. That many of them were granted land for cultivation has been noted earlier,⁴⁴ and they devoted a part of their time to the cultivation of such land. The tribal workers who did not reside within the coalfields lived at varying distances and lived and worked in the coal fields for varying periods too. Thus some returned to their village homes at least once a week, while others returned for relatively long periods. Particularly striking was the feature that wherever their permanent residence might have been, almost all the tribal/semi-tribal workers were also agriculturists, spent a considerable part of their working hours every agricultural season in agriculture and obtained a part of their subsistence from agriculture. Some of them came from villages near enough to permit them to attend to cultivation as

occasions arose, others coming from somewhat distant villages left their family members in charge of land and returned only when their supervision and labour were most necessary. There were also others who were landless or land-poor. But they too found work in agriculture in planting and harvesting seasons when the large requirement of labour led to a rise in agricultural wages and work of this type became temporarily more remunerative than mining.¹⁵ The sort of connection of labour supply with agricultural cycles and the consequent fluctuations noticed earlier also remained a most persistent feature.¹⁶

The non-local, non-tribal migrant workers who, as noted above, formed a growing minority, however, stayed in the coalfields for comparatively longer periods, usually eight or nine months or even more than that at a stretch¹⁷, and thus the growth of this component, though a slow one, imparted a relatively greater stability to the labour force. But these migrant miners, of whom between 40 to 50 per cent were males of working age and were not accompanied by their family, looked to the villages of their origin as their 'home', had some connection with the rural economy and agriculture as well as familial, social and community life there and returned there at periodic intervals¹⁸. It must, however, be noted that they were not agriculturists and rural people in the sense in which local tribal and semi-tribal workers were. Dependence on agriculture was, however, not the only basis for links with the village. Religious as well as familial and social festivities such as marriages were major purposes for frequent visits to the village¹⁹. All this underscored the strength of the traditional ties.

Women workers, as noted, constituted a large percentage of the labour force. And they had a special reason for going back to their village. Most of the non-local women workers went to their native villages for the birth of their children and the local labour stayed in the neighbouring village.²⁰

1930s and 1940s

Despite more than a century old history of the industry, the problems found in earlier phases continued to plague the managements even in the 1930s and 1940s. Enquiries made in the Jharia coalfield as late as in the mid-1940s indicated that by and large the mine workers did not attend the mines for more than about 4-7 days per week²¹. However, while prior to 1930 an increasing proportion, as noted earlier, was tending to settle down on the coalfields, the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee of 1938 considered that with the onset of Depression in 1929-30 there was a slight reversal in the trend²². The fall in cash earnings due to cuts in money wages and the exclusion of women from underground work which began in 1930²³ were regarded as the two major factors that helped to maintain and accentuate the interconnection and interdependence between the precapitalist subsistence sector and capitalist mining sector.

In the war years the mine-workers' involvement in agriculture tended to increase further. One reason was the high prices that could be obtained for paddy. Another reason was that in view of the war time inflation, scarcity and

bad quality of rice supplies, the miners wanted to ensure supply of rice that would meet their consumption requirements for four to six months⁵⁴. Miners who had about three or four bighas of land either owned and/or tenanted by them or given to them by the colliery management found agricultural operations relatively more paying than their work in the mines⁵⁵. It was estimated that in the months of June-July in the Raniganj fields and Jharia fields about 40 per cent and 30 to 45 per cent of miners respectively returned to their villages for sowing and transplantation, and in October-December 50 per cent and 25 to 40 per cent respectively for harvesting. Thus, over one-third to one-half of the labour force left the mines for agricultural operations, all generally about the same time⁵⁵. This was reflected in seasonal falls in coal raisings⁵⁶.

It is hard to obtain data about the landholding status of the miners. However, from a Government of India's sample survey made in Jharia in 1945, it was found that just above half of the sampled units⁵⁷ did not own land, no less than 47.35 per cent owned land, the average holding being 4.18 bigha (1 bigha = $\frac{1}{4}$ acre). About 5 per cent of the miners, though being landless, also visited their villages during the two major agricultural seasons, presumably to work for some landlord⁵⁸. Thus, at least a very substantial proportion of the local miners continued to exhibit peasant-miner or semi-proletarian characteristics.

The miners, however, visited their villages not for agricultural purposes only. Those who came from villages in the neighbourhood went home perhaps more frequently than before to visit their families, as following the exclusion of women from underground work from 1930 onwards the majority of their women and children remained behind in their village homes. Social and religious events also called back the workers to their villages. In short, all the problems that were experienced earlier continued to beset the employers, perhaps to a greater extent⁵⁹. All this indicates the persistence of strong traditional kinship and family ties from which the miners used to draw support and succour. It is in order to meet the continuing labour problems, labour shortage in particular, in the mid-1940s Gorakhpuri labour system was organized. But they too were not allowed to sever their rural links⁶⁰.

However, some data are available to indicate the extent of growth of a settled labour force. An enquiry made sometime in the mid-1940s into 1,030 miners' families in Bihar revealed that 440 families or 42 per cent never left the coal fields for visit to the village and 57 families were found to be visiting their family only once in three years or at longer intervals. Thus 48 per cent of the labour force covered by the enquiry may be considered to have permanently settled in the coalfields of Bihar⁶¹. Another enquiry having a much larger coverage of 22,521 miners showed that the proportion of permanently settled workers was as high as 55.7 per cent⁶². Whether this reflected settling down on the part of local tribal labour or increasing influx of non-local, non-tribal labour is, however, not clear from our source. But we may hazard the guess that an increasing proportion of the labour force was tending to settle

down permanently in the coal fields and that a sizeable second or even third generation work force was emerging. But even the second or third generation workers continued to have rural traits and a traditional labour rhythm. At the same time, withdrawal of women labour from underground led to greater instability of the labour force.

Semi-Proletarians of the Coal Mines

The discussion, as made so far, shows the formation of a mining labour force composed of migrants. But, in contrast to the migrants in the jute mills, they were overwhelmingly local people coming from short, even just trekking, distance and belonged to tribal and low-caste Hindu agricultural labour and marginal peasant groups. Despite some changes over time, throughout the period labour supply to the mines remained most chaotic, and a settled, stabilized labour force failed to emerge. Particularly conspicuous was the persistent and perpetuated nature of the rural and agrarian links of the mine workers, the dependence of labour supply on agricultural cycles and variation of season or even weather, and pre-industrial tribal/semi-tribal rhythm of labour and boisterous relaxation. Here was the evolution of a labour force which had certain distinctive traits.

That the mine workers had a proletarian socio-economic status in the sense that they sold their labour power for cash wages is obvious, and they can certainly be considered as a mining proletariat. But that term needs to be used with some qualification⁶³. The proletarian status of the large majority of mine workers was considerably modified firstly, by circular movements, as in the case of jute mill workers, between the rural areas and mining areas, but usual not involving any permanent withdrawal from either of the two areas. However, in the case of mine workers the frequency of movement was much greater and the duration of stay in the mining areas was usually much less than that of the jute mill workers. The continued access to land, forest produce and other means of subsistence in the countryside was the second important aspect significantly affecting the status of the mine workers. The evidence presented above demonstrates that the bulk of the miners combined their wage-earning activities in the mines with various adaptation of 'peasant-like' subsistence activities⁶⁴ and occasionally wage work outside the capitalist mine sector, for example, construction activities during the World War II⁶⁵. Even under the Gorakhpuri labour system organized during the war period the workers, kept confined in mine camps and working full-time while in the camps, were not cut off from their communities and dependence on agriculture. Finally, the proletarianization of mine workers was not associated with disengagement from community, kinship and other traditional ties. Such disengagement and consequent individualization have been considered as two distinguishing characteristics of the Marxist concept of proletariat⁶⁶. In the process there emerged what may be termed as a semi-proletarian labour force composed essentially of temporary and part-time labour of half-peasants, half-miners or peasant-miners, and thus differed from the jute mill and other perennially-operated-factory labour force in a very important respect. Large sections of mine workers seemed to have

applied their unutilized labour time in agriculture to work in the mines. In view of all this can their participation in the labour market be considered to, be of a 'discretionary' character? Can they be termed 'target workers' workers who worked in the mines with the aim of earning that much of cash that was needed for the purpose of commercial consumption and productive and unproductive accumulation through purchase of land and animals as well as for meeting various monetary obligations? Answers to these questions largely depend on interpretation of available evidence. But this much can be concluded that the process of formation of mining labour force was essentially in the nature of semi-proletarianization characterized by the participation of units of subsistence production in the labour market.

Because of the nature of location of mines and the settlement pattern there was by and large no question of rural-urban migration. For the tribal workers constituting the overwhelming majority of the labour force, at the most one can speak of migration from agriculture to mine work, but this was essentially of short or temporary nature involving stay away from the village residence for a period ranging from one or two nights to three or four months. The mine labour force was basically a rural population with very limited contact with market towns like Jharia or Raniganj and exhibited little urban characteristics. Thus, in these respects too it differed from the jute labour force. In view of all this the mine labour force may be viewed as a rural industrial proletariat composed of semi-proletarians—a rural industrial proletariat in the midst of a process of formation.

However, with the beginning of a change in the composition of the mine labour force involving a slow but growing influx of labour from several Bihar, U.P. and C.P. districts and also with a tendency towards an increase in its skilled component after the first World War the miners tended to turn to work on a full-time basis. But that did not lead to a breaking of ties with the rural economy. In their rural connections and in the pattern of migration too these migrant miners came to resemble the jute workers to a certain extent.

In a certain sense some of the problems and features of the mine labour force mentioned earlier, particularly the erratic pattern of labour supply, spells of intense work followed by temporary withdrawal, and rural nexus, were not unique to India. In the early decades of Industrial Revolution many industries and mining in particular were beset with somewhat similar problems.⁶⁷ But in Britain, several countries of western Europe and the USA, the heartland of capitalist industrialization, these were essentially problems of an early transitional stage.⁶⁸

But in the Bengal-Bihar coalfields what needs to be recognized and explained is the persistent and perpetuated nature of these problems and the evolution of a semi-proletarian labour force. Much of the conventional explanation offered by not only mine owners and managements and colonial government officials but also by other observers and analysts⁶⁹ is unsatisfactory and does not go to the root. The commonly held views, as reiterated by the LIC in mid-1940s had been that the mine worker was "an agriculturist

first and an industrial worker afterwards”⁷⁰

But the economic characteristics of the labour force implicit in such a view are not borne out by the findings, admittedly limited, of the LIC itself with regard to the landholding status of the mine workers presented in the preceding section. That social and religious factors or, to put it otherwise, traditional social attitudes and nexus were very important had already been noted.

But these too do not provide an adequately satisfactory explanation.

An Explanatory Framework—The Structural Dimension

Our explanation is essentially a dual one. One part lies in the structural context, and the other part in the contribution of workers themselves in the maintenance of the village links.

With regard to the structural context the first point to be stressed is the mutual interaction between the organization of the industry and capital in its specificities, the physical aspect of the production process, and the labour force. In the Bengal-Bihar coal belt this interaction took place in a way that led to the formation and perpetuation of an unstable labour force with substantial rural links.

In India the quality of coal was not high. But with seams quite thick, close to the surface and very moderately inclined, and relative dryness the mining conditions were extraordinarily favourable.⁷¹ Yet mining operations in India were carried on in a most chaotic and irrational manner. This is not the place to go into a detailed consideration of the nature of the mining industry in general. Here, however, only this much may be briefly noted that mining operations—deeper extraction from the existing mines and opening up of new ones—by their very nature necessitated continuous investment, mechanization and rationalization of methods of production, and increasing division of labour leading to the emergence of a skilled labour force.⁷² But with very few exceptions in none of the Raniganj, Jharia and other near-by fields the above developments took place.

Within the overall context of retarded industrialization—under colonialism the growth of the Indian coal mining industry was determined by the zamindars controlling land, and holding the sub-soil rights of the region, and by the mining interests, primarily British managing agencies and secondarily small Indian owners extending their operations in the area,⁷³ and constituted “a typical example of a derivative enclave.” The ‘fantastic’ shapes and boundaries of various bases of coal-bearing lands which had a deleterious effect upon mining methods, reported by the first official experts who surveyed the mining techniques in Jharia, were closely related with the zamindari system and particularly the tremendous greed for ‘salam’ payment received by the zamindars at the time of grant of mining leases.

The mining interests themselves, composed mainly of large limited companies controlled by Calcutta-based British managing agencies and a large number of small Indian concerns,⁷⁴ were also utterly oblivious to the requirements of sound and efficient mining. The sheer mercantile motive of

the small colliery owners, almost all Indians, led to the maximization of coal-raising for short-term gains, indiscriminate and deleterious mining methods, dangerously low technical composition of capital, shallow small working, and disastrous underground fires ⁷⁶

Many of these small enterprises were "operated like a treasure trove which (were) emptied according to the whims of the proprietor" ⁷⁷ The method of remunerations of the British managing concerns which was not linked with net profits and was based on a commission system placed a "high premium on high outputs, big sales and large profits" and tended "to focus on immediate rather than future gain, it being remembered as that these managing agents also control mills and other industrial concerns which benefit by cheap fuel" ⁷⁸ As put by an official committee

"the coal trade in India has been rather like a race in which profit has always come in first, with safety a poor second, sound methods a 'also ran', and national welfare a 'dead horse' " ⁷⁹

Production Fluctuations and Impact on Labour

A limited internal market and regular sequence of boom with occasional variations (1894-1920), stagnation (1923-1930) and depression (early 1930s) aggravated the problems. In a situation of falling coal prices the mine owners at times reduced coal production in their bid to keep the prices high, and at other times stepped up production to maintain their income by resorting to 'slaughter mining' ⁸⁰

It was in such a structural context that the burden of sudden fluctuations in the fortunes of the industry as a whole and of the numerous discrete units spread over a large area, had to be borne by the mine workers. The disorganized character of the coal industry was particularly manifest in the shortage of tubs and the irregular supply of railway wagons. If there was a shortage of hauling tubs, the mine worker had to wait in the galleries at no cost to the employer or management. The irregular availability of railway wagons resulted in sudden outbursts of feverish activities in the mines, followed by long periods of forced idleness ⁸¹ With a sudden spurt in demand for higher output the labour requirement went up and the miners and loaders were to overload the tubs. If business collapsed or some mines had to close down operations, the workers were thrown out of employment without any compensation to them ⁸² All this meant terrible uncertainty of employment. Such practices have also to be viewed in conjunction with the methods of recruitment, management and control over labour through intermediaries of different types, ⁸³ which compounded the uncertainty and insecurity. All this was in no way conducive either to the moulding of industrial discipline or to the creation of a fulltime, efficient, stable labour force. Rather, the structure of industry and capital and the methods of labour recruitment encouraged an alternation between spell of intense labour on the one hand and temporary withdrawal of labour, drinking bouts and boisterous relaxation on the other, which belonged to pre-industrial labour rhythms. ⁸⁴ To put in a different way, in their behavioural pattern the mine

workers tried to adapt themselves to the structural features of the industry

Though the mine owners and managements occasionally tried to grapple with problems of discipline and ensuring regular and steady work habit, because of the nature of the industry and capital mentioned above, they themselves by and large remained indifferent to the promotion and inculcation of a formalized and impersonal industrial discipline. That the industry itself was largely responsible for problems with regard to steady labour supply and regular work habit was hinted at by Treharne Rees in 1919 and a year later by the 1920 Coalfields Committee.⁸⁶ It was found that after about two and half decades of the real beginning of the industry around mid-1890s there were no regular shifts and no rule limited the hours for which a miner could work or stay underground,⁸⁷ and absolutely nothing was done to impart and bring a change in the work orientation of the workers.⁸⁸ Further, the neighbouring coal mines resorted to poaching of labour from one another. On grounds of impracticability and cost, the mine owners, however, were reluctant to introduce regular shifts, rules limiting working hours and stoppage of the practice of "rubbing the labour" of the neighbours.⁸⁹ The "desultory and haphazard method" of recruiting labour⁹⁰ also stood in the way of enforcing industrial discipline. Many of these features such as enticement of labour,⁹¹ absence of training arrangement⁹² and labour recruitment and supervision through intermediaries and the associated abuses⁹³ were found to be prevalent even after twenty five years when the Labour Investigation Committee conducted its enquiry.

Wage Earning

The second point is in relation to the abysmally low level of wages maintained throughout the career of the industry during the British period. According to the estimate made by the Labour Enquiry Commission of 1896 the monthly wage of a miner in Sanctoria in Raniganj was on an average Rs. 5½ to Rs. 6 during the period from 1880 to 1894, while the rice prices were rising by 53 per cent. Further, the monthly wage of an 'able-bodied' agricultural labourer in the Burdwan district, though falling from Rs. 9 in 1880 to Rs. 7 in 1894, was higher than the wage of a miner.⁹⁴ It is apparent that (a) the real wages were falling and (b) the expanding capitalist mining sector did not provide much material incentives for labourers.

Any analysis of movement of money and real wages of miners over time is beset with serious difficulties. Available evidence, however, indicates some improvement in money wage in the first two decades of the present century. It is also possible that despite a fall in money wages in later years, real wages tended to increase.⁹⁵ But an enquiry conducted by the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee investigator, of wages and expenditures of 1030 families representing all categories of workers in the Bihar coalfields showed that the large majority lived at the subsistence level or even lower than that. It was found that the monthly earnings amounted to Rs. 11-8-2 per worker and Rs. 17-7-4 per family, while the cost of the minimum amount of food, clothing

and other requirements of the average worker's family consisting of 3·4 persons was estimated at about Rs. 24.⁹⁶

Further, enquiries made with regard to comparative monthly earnings of workers in the mines, cotton mills and engineering enterprises, as presented in the table show a wide gulf between wages in the mines on the one hand and wages of cotton mill and engineering workers on the other

AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS, 1937-1938

	Rs	As	Ps
Miners and loaders in Bihar	10	3	2
Weavers in Bombay cotton mills	49	9	11
Workers in the engineering concerns in Bihar	42	0	0

SOURCE Radhakamal Mukherjee, *The Indian Working Class*, p 116, Table xxix

The monthly earnings in the mines were roughly less than one-fifth of the wages of textile workers and one-fourth of that of engineering workers⁹⁷

In 1945 family budget enquiries were made under a GOI scheme separately for Jharia and Raniganj fields. In the Jharia fields the average family of 3·62 persons was found to have a weekly income of Rs 12-cluding the money value of concessions was Rs 9-9-3, while the average weekly expenditure was Rs. 8-1-9. Thus the families in both the fields covered by the enquiry appeared to have some saving. But a closer scrutiny of the data thrown up by the survey shows that in both the areas the families spent very little on protective food such as milk, meat, fish, vegetables etc., and that a very high percentage of expenditure—77·7 in Jharia and 72·4 in Raniganj—was spent on food in which cereals constituted the main item.⁹⁸ This indicated a very low standard of living. Such low wages and standard of living meant that a considerable part of the cost of maintenance and renewal of the labour force had to be borne by the workers themselves. Further, this tended to strengthen the participation of the mine labour force in the labour market on a temporary basis.⁹⁹

Work Process and Insecurity

The third point is that the physical conditions of work inside the mines were most unpleasant, insecure and hazardous. Inadequate ventilation resulted in a suffocating atmosphere, smoke-filled galleries and poor visibility. The last mentioned feature was accentuated by the absence of proper lighting arrangement and the very slow introduction of electric lighting. As late as 1940s only 6 per cent of sampled units in the Jharia coalfield were electrified. Even in the mines having electricity, electric light points were so few and located at such distances that many of the galleries were left in "utter darkness".¹⁰¹

Rigour of Work

With the little or very limited mechanization the extraction and loading system based on labour-intensive technology, hand tool and primitive methods involved most arduous labour. Here is what Lord Curzon reported about conditions around 1900

'I asked Mr Reader, the Officiating Inspector for a special report. What he told me was that he had repeatedly found an utter disregard for human life, resulting partly from ignorance, and partly from carelessness. In many of the mines the head gear and winding apparatus was unsafe. Frequently the managers were absent, and the work was proceeding under no sort of control. In one case, in a Bengal coal-mine, Mr Reader found two hundred and fifty people (men, women, children and infants) at work, where he reported the ventilation as nil, the air as foul in the extreme with smoke and gases, and the condition, as unfit for human existence. In two other gaseous mines, where the managers were absent, and incompetent substitutes had been left in charge, he found huge fires kindled in the working galleries, and naked lights suspended from the roof where the cutting was going on' ¹⁰²

Here is an account of the kind of strenuous and inhuman labour to which the women workers engaged in loading and carrying of labour prior to the abolition of women labour were subjected

"The miner and his wife commonly work together, the man cutting the coal, and the woman carrying it to the surface in baskets up a roadway 750 feet long with an inclination of 1 in 10. She will thus walk over five miles, and for half the distance carry a load of 80 lbs, and will have raised 13 cwt to a height of 75 feet. This is a remarkable day's work for a woman" ¹⁰³

With increasing mechanization, though at a very slow pace, the hardship of work was somewhat lessened. Yet in the 1910s and 1920s in many mines gins or capstans operated by men, or more often, by women were found as the regular source of power. In 1921 one-fourth of the mines did not have any mechanical power. Underground tracks were placed only through the main alleys, to which coal had to be carried as far as half a mile on the heads of women. Movement of cars within the mines was to a large extent done by human power ¹⁰⁴. As late as in the mid-forties the LIC found the working conditions quite trying and in some cases "almost unbearable" ¹⁰⁵

Another aspect related to the conditions of work was the hazardous nature of work. In fact, mine work in all countries is full of considerable hazard, but in the Bengal-Bihar coalfields these were greatly enhanced, for the equipment handled was primitive and the managements ignored even the most elementary safety measures. They also did not give even rudimentary training to the mine workers about the hazards of the occupation ¹⁰⁶. Sometimes official complaints were made about "the utter disregard for human life displayed by certain colliery owners" ¹⁰⁷

It is no wonder that such a situation led to high rates of roof collapses, flood and fire which turned the coal mines into graveyards for mine workers

A study made a few years back showed that between 1900 and 1939, 6911 mine workers perished in the course of their employment, an average of 172.7 per annum.¹⁰⁸ In 1936 there were 846 accidents, with 420 workers killed and 714 injured, and the Podih diaster (Dishegarh in Raniganj area) alone killed 209 workers.¹⁰⁹ Thus the conditions of work were wretchedly precarious.

Housing and Social Security.

Fourthly, housing and provisions against accidents, ill-health and epidemics, unemployment and old age were virtually absent. The larger part of the life of the mine workers outside work was passed in overcrowded, ill-ventilated and bleak 'standardised' housing provided by the employers or the *dhowrahs*, the makeshift huts constructed by the workers themselves, considered by the 1946 LIC as "mere apologies for homes".¹¹⁰ The *dhowrahs* having a standing floor space of 10 ~ 10 sq ft. usually quartered 4 to 7 persons and often even 12 to 15 persons.¹¹¹ The Commission reported

"The existing atmosphere and outlook in the mining settlements is so drab and dreary that few human beings would have any inducement to continue for long spells of time in these"¹¹²

Most of the mining areas were situated far from *bazaars*, and there were "no amenities of civilized life".¹¹² No wonder that most workers resorted to heavy drinking¹¹⁴ which was often considered by managements as a major reason for the irregular working habits of the workers.¹¹⁵

Elementary public and health services—water supply, conservancy sanitation, medical facilities, etc., were absent or most inadequate,¹¹⁶ thus producing epidemics of cholera and small pox and also fever and respiratory diseases, the major killers in the mining areas in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹⁷ As late as in the 1940s the public services remained most deplorable resulting in all kinds of diseases.¹¹⁸

Protective labour legislation like the workmen's Compensation Act were introduced in "a very halting and piecemeal fashion",¹¹⁹ and were full of loopholes enabling mine owners to evade the liabilities.¹²⁰ Other welfare functions were for all practical purposes non-existent. In a revealing admission made before the RCIL, the Indian Mining Association representing the European mining interests stated.

"Generally the miner is left to himself to look after his own welfare. Provision for old age and premature retirement is not general. Such questions would have to be considered, if necessary, in connection with Indian habits and family customs."¹²¹

The Indian Mining Federation of Indian colliery owners was even more candid in its admission.

"The Federation cannot help confessing that the welfare among the mining labour is almost absent, whatever scanty efforts have been made being, however, entirely undertaken by the employees themselves".¹²²

Thus the migrant workers themselves had to bear the cost of their welfare.

To sum up, the conditions of work and living in the mining sector were such that most of the peasant miners could not contemplate a permanent shift to wage employment in mines. In contrast, the rural areas and community ties provided a kind of cushion—a measure of social security. Not only that. The evidence presented above unmistakably shows that the cost of production and reproduction of labour power was largely subsidized by the migrant workers themselves.

Employers' Attitude

Though at times the employers expressed their irritation with such a system of temporary, unstable and migrant labour, available evidence tends to show that the system appears to have been acceptable to them.¹²³ There were two major reasons. The nature of the industry and organization of capital in the two major coalfields and also elsewhere did not require a full-time, fully settled and stabilized labour force. The spasmodic pattern of work by the mine workers did fit in with the way in which the mine companies functioned.

The other reason was that such a labour system was considered cheap.¹²⁴ The system, particularly the continued access to means of subsistence, enabled the mine owners and managements to fix wages at an extremely low level. Moreover, because of the system the mining interests could go away without making even limited improvement in mining operations and introducing minimal welfare measures. For example, even while conceding the need for introducing certain measures suggested by Rees in 1919, witness after witness representing the employers argued and stressed before the 1920 Committee how such measures would increase cost.¹²⁵ In addition, the system turned out as a means of shifting the burden of fluctuating fortunes of the industry on to the shoulders of the peasant-miners.¹²⁶

What was the government's attitude? It seems that it did not speak in one voice and at times took an ambivalent position. But by and large it remained not only indifferent to the life situation of the workers but skilfully provided support to employers.¹²⁷

In view of all this and, more particularly, out of narrow, short-term considerations, the mining interests devised and maintained a relationship of support between the mine workers and agriculture or other non-wage activities through a spectrum of forms. While the zamindari or *nokarani* system introduced in the early days of the industry and the system of Gorakhpuri labour formed towards the close of our period strikingly illustrate the point, there were various other forms which too served the purpose.

Thus despite some changes over the long period, the system of migrant labour appears to have remained unchanged in its essential features. Yet by the 1940s it was possible to speak in a loose sense of two broad categories of mine workers. For one group their livelihood was only temporarily based on wage labour in the capitalist sector, the latter being viewed as a relatively

short-term means to an end. For the other group wage labour was becoming relatively more important and they stayed in the mines for longer periods.

Contribution of the Mine Workers

So far our emphasis has been only on the contribution of the structural factors beyond the control of workers. But to confine the explanation only to this aspect means denial of any role by the workers, and amounts to the position that only one side, that is, capital alone had the capacity to shape history.¹²⁸

But mine workers, however ignorant, stupid, irrational and superstitious they might have been considered by their employers, were not mere passive, inert and unthinking victims of the structure. They had a relative autonomy and were in their own way participating in the shaping of their own life and also history in a broad sense.

Most of the mine workers coming from areas characterized by poor soil condition, mono-crop cultivation of *aman* rice, lack of irrigation facilities and absolute dependence on monsoon rain, increasing curbs on traditional forest rights, and intense exploitation by *zamindars*, *mahajans*, and *sarkar* had very limited options before them. The frequent, repetitive movements and counter-movements between the pre-capitalist, pre industrial rural economy and society and the capitalist mining sector was not so much a matter of choice as one of necessity.

Appalling poverty, lack of any employment in the non-agricultural months, bad harvests, often resulting in famines or famine-like situations, drove the tribal people, other groups of peasants and artisans to seek wage employment in the mines. But the miserably low level of wages, precarious conditions of work and living, and recurrent recessions causing unemployment, compelled them to return to their villages and fall back on subsistence economic activities. The rural economy, the traditional social ties, and the family residing in the villages met, as in the case of the migrant jute mill workers, a considerable part of the cost of renewal and maintenance of the mine work force and provided many of the social security functions. Deep in their minds the peasant-miners were most certainly aware of the limited options open before them and behaved accordingly. "Periodical excursions from the coalfields",¹²⁹ "seasonal absenteeism" to participate in various types of subsistence activities and particularly agriculture, "craving to get away from the mine and be among their fellowmen in their villages"¹³⁰ and such other practices were all mine workers' own ways of maintaining themselves and their families and taking care of social security.

In all this is found a constant striving on the part of the mine workers to make the best out of a situation offering limited options. The migration of large groups of men and women from the famine-stricken areas to the mines, the taking up of employment in road and railway construction in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the fairly close correlation between levels of rice prices and the ebb and flow of migration noticed often, the drift

to the village homes in early 1930s prompted by lower earnings due to cut in wages and also exclusion of women from underground work¹³¹ the move back to rural areas and agriculture during World War II referred to earlier,¹³² and the move out of the mines to seek wage employment in the military construction works such as aerodromes and road building near the Bengal-Bihar coalfields which paid relatively better wages,¹³³ are some of the striking illustrations of the relatively autonomous behaviour pattern mentioned above

These as well as the less striking but regular movements to and from mines also indicate that the peasant-miners were not as ignorant, irrational and tradition-bound as has usually been suggested. Of course there was the fear of the unknown and work in the darkness of mines. But can this, particularly in view of the series of mine accidents resulting in death and injuries, be considered irrational? They had their own awareness of the options before them, and tried their most to take advantage of them. This must not, however, be construed to mean, most misleadingly as has been done by some scholars¹³⁴ that a "calculus of choice" or "opportunity cost calculus" was in operation. The migrant peasant-miners living at the margin of subsistence and subjected to unfreedom of one kind or another had no real choice before them but tried to respond like rational beings to the most intolerable conditions prevailing both in the countryside and in the mine areas.¹³⁵

Capital, Work and Tension

There was one more important dimension of the role of the peasant-miners in perpetuating the interpenetration between the subsistence rural economic activities and wage-earning activities in mines. Each of the different periods mentioned in the earlier section was marked by tension between the tribal and other peasant groups who worked in the mines on the one hand and the demands imposed upon them by conditions of work in the mines and also conditions of living in the mining areas on the other. The tension arose as the groups of men and women joining mine work were accustomed to work habits and work culture distinctly and radically different from the nature and patterns of work in the mines.

In a sense there was nothing novel in this tension. In the process of industrialization tension between working people fresh to modern industries and capitalist industrialization has been experienced in, among other countries, Britain and the United States. But in those countries such tension had been a passing or transient phenomenon and in the course of time faded in relative importance.¹³⁶

By contrast, in India it was essentially a recurrence of similar tensions. The source of this recurrent tension lay not only in the entry of fresh groups of peasants into the mine labour force but also in the fact that the rural links of even older groups of mine workers were never snapped and in consequence there was no complete restructuring of work habit and work culture. The structural context earlier precluded such restructuring.

Given the absence of class organization of any form till 1920 and the

extremely poor and intermittent nature of organized trade union activities even thereafter, the peasant-cum-mine workers instead of having an open confrontation with their employers over issues of wage and security gave vent to their agony, frustration, discontent, and anger through these forms. In many cases, as indicated above, these also represented conscious attempts to reach a situation where a relative improvement in subsistence and/or higher earning could be made. For decades these acts remained the most obvious and the most wide-spread responses of the peasant-miners to their misery and exploitation, and in many involved conscious combination to a certain degree.

In this sense return to their village homes and other similar actions may be considered as a subterranean form of protest and manifestation of a particular level of proletarian consciousness or rather feeling.¹³⁷

Conclusion

The analysis in the preceding sections has been carried out in some detail to show the complex interrelationship and interaction that developed between the tribal subsistence activities and semi-feudal economy subjected to the dual processes of dissolution and conservation on the one hand and the capitalist mining sector on the other. This was articulated through a migrant labour system.¹³⁸ The system contributed towards capital accumulation and helped to raise the average rate of profit.

But the system had also a significant bearing on class formation and class consciousness. A brief summary of some of the implications is in order. One, the structure of the coal mine industry and the nature of the typical coal mine enterprises in the colonial period and the absence of development typical of the history of Western Europe and North America, militated against the formation and growth of a skilled and/or semi-skilled, stabilized labour force—a labour force which would not frequently and periodically move to and from the tribal and peasant economy. Two, irrespective of whether money and/or real wage moved up, down or remained constant, the difference between the income necessary to allow the mine workers to support their families and also to provide for their own insurance against accidents, sickness, unemployment, and old age on the one hand and the wage earnings made in the mines was so wide that the mine workers continued to rely on the tribal subsistence pattern and semi-feudal agriculture, and also their kinship ties for the support of their families. Three, the absence of proper housing and elementary social service functions strengthened the temporary nature of mine labour force participation in the labour market. Fourthly, in the process the labour force that developed remained suspended half-way between the pre-capitalist economy and the capitalist mining sector. To put it differently, the mine-workers continued to exhibit features of semi-proletarians—wage workers with varied and extensive links with the non-capitalist sector.

Two more concluding observations need to be made. One is that the mine workers' dependence on subsistence economic activities and tradi-

tional ties was not just the product of operation of forces beyond the control of the mine workers. They maintained this relationship in a relatively autonomous fashion in order to derive a part of their livelihood and insure themselves in a situation of chronic uncertainty and insecurity. Related to this is another important point. They did not adapt themselves passively to changes and conditions imposed from above. In myriad forms they tried to resist the mechanisms of control and exploitation wielded by encroaching capitalism. This underlines the need for further research on forms of protest of the mine workers, and consciousness and culture of semi-proletarians.

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- 19 B Foley, *Report on Labour in Bengal* (hereafter Foley Report), para 64, also *ibid* evidence given by the Manager of the Egra Colliery (Bengal Coal Co.), Inspection Notes, p 44, Scott of Sodepur (Bengal Coal Co.) p 46, and Miller of the Equitable Coal Co. p 47
 - 20 *Foley Report*, para 65
 - 21 *Ibid*, Inspection Notes, p 44
 - 22 Under the *zamindari* and *nokarani* (service tenancy) systems practised by all the major early companies at the Raniganj Coal fields and the East Indian Railway in its colliery at Gridih mine workers were settled on the non-coal bearing surface land around the collieries over which the coal companies acquired zamindari rights free or at nominal rents with the specific condition that they were to work a certain number of days in the company mine. In some mines they were also given rent-free patches of land on which they were allowed to raise crops and vegetables according to their choice. See Ranajit Das Gupta, 'Structure of Labour Market in Colonial India', *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW), Special Number, 1981, vol XVI, Nos 44, 45 and 46, pp 1787-88, and also *Foley Report, op cit*, *Inspection Notes, Evidence given by the Egra Colliery Manager, p 43, Adhai Coal Co. Manager, and E C Agabeg of Barakar Coal Co, p 47*
 - 23 *Ibid* para 63
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- 48 *RCII Report* pp 115-6, 117 and *RCII Evidence*, Vol IV, Pt I, Final Memorandum of the Government of Bihar and Orissa, para 2 A
- 49 *RCII Evidence* Vol V, Pt I Report on Labour Conditions in the Coal Mines of Assamol Subdivision p 177
- 50 *Ibid*, p 180
- 51a *IIC on Coal* pp 37, 38
- 51b *BIFC Report*, p 186
- 52 In 1938 no women was working underground *Ibid*, p 18
- 53 *Ibid* p 27
- 54 *Ibid* p 26
- 55 *Ibid*, p 27
- 56 *Ibid* p 28
- 57 In the survey 1398 units were covered *Ibid*, p 29
- 58 *Ibid*, p 29
- 59 Radhakamal Mukherjee *The Indian Working Class*, Bombay, 1945 p 114
- 60 For Gorakhpuri labour see, among others, R Das Gupta, 'Structure of Labour Market in Colonial India', *loc cit* p 1789
- 61 *IIC on Coal* p 7
- 62 *Ibid*, p 23
- 63 Cf Josh De Wind 'From peasants to Mines The Background to strikes in the Mines of Peril' in Robin Cohen, Peter C W Gutkind and Phyllis Brazier (eds) *Peasants and Proletarians The Struggle of Third World Workers* Hutchinson University Library 1979 p 167
- 64 Sidney W Mintz 'The Rural Proletariat and the Problem of Rural Proletarian Consciousness' in *ibid*, p 175
- 65 *IIC Report on Coal* p 24
- 66 Snapping of kinship/community ties and consequent individualization are often viewed as two distinguishing characteristics of Marxist concept of proletariat For such a view see Mintz *op cit* pp 186-7 There is no doubt that Marx himself, in discussing proletarianization in *Capital I* had put forward such a concept of proletariat But the historical processes of proletarianization even in the European heartlands had been much more complex and remote from the theoretical abstractions made in *Capital* That Marx himself was fully aware of these is clearly indicated in, amongst others, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *The Civil War in France* For evidence and analyses of historical experiences relating to extensive survival of communities and traditional culture in England see E P Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class*, Sidney Polland *Genesis of Modern Management*, Pelican, 1975, and John Foster *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, University Paperbacks, Methuen, London 1977 and in the USA H Gutman, *Work Society and Culture in Industrializing America*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977
- 67 See Polland, *op cit* pp 213-16, 227-30, E P Thompson, *op cit*, p 392-3, and Gutman, *op cit* p 5-6
- 68 Drawing upon rich empirical evidence Gutman has, however, shown that much problems persisted in what he has termed as "Industrializing America" throughout the period 1815-1919 (*op cit* pp 7-10)
- 69 See for example *BIFC Report*, p 30, para 64
- 70 *IIC Report on Coal* p 26
- 71 Buchanan, *op cit*, pp 259-60
- 72 Dilip Simeon, 'Industry and Workforce in Chotonagpur An Outling of the Structural Characteristics (1920s and '30s)' in Arvind N Das, V Nilkant and P S Dubey (eds), *The Workers and the Working Class A Labour Studies Anthology*, PECCE, New Delhi, 1983, p 189, and Dietmar Rothermund and D C Wadhwa (eds), *Zamindars, Mines and Peasants*, Monohar, New Delhi, 1978, pp 168-9

- 73 Rothermund *op cit* p XV
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- 76 *Report of the Indian Coalfield Committee, 1946*, p 23, and Simeon, *op cit*, p 196
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- 78 Mining Committee *Report, 1937*, Vol I, p 28
- 79 *Ibid*, p 30
- 80 Bishnupada Guha, 'The Coal Mining Industry' in V B Singh (ed.), *op cit*, pp 314-5, and D R Gadgil, *op cit*, pp 279-80
- 81 Mukherjee, *op cit*, pp 111-2, 115
- 82 Simeon, *op cit*, p 197
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- 84 Cf Reinherd Bendix, *Work and Authority*
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- 86 *Ibid*, Ch V, para 46
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- 88 *Ibid*, ch V, para 55
- 89 *Ibid*, see evidence given by, among others W C Kurkend of Indian Mining Association, W Burt, Central Kurkend Colliery (both of Jharia) and D N Das, Manager, Banerjee and Co's collieries (Raniganj)
- 90 *Ibid*, ch V, para 46
- 91 *LIC Report on Coal*, p 26
- 92 *Ibid*, pp 38-9
- 93 *Ibid* pp 33-5
- 94 *IFC Report 1896*, p 7
- 95 For some indications of money wage movement in the mines between 1900 and 1938 see Jurgen Kuczynski, 'Condition of Workers (1880-1950)' in V B Singh (ed.), *op cit*, pp 633-4. It is found that between 1900 and 1922 there was a steady and continuous increase in the mine workers' money wages. Thereafter and particularly in the depression years a steep decline took place. However, this was accompanied by a sharp fall in the prices of foodgrains with perhaps some upward impact on real wages. See also Rothermund, *op cit*, pp 10-11
- 96 Mukherjee, *op cit*, pp 106, 119, B R Seth, *op cit*, and *BLEC Report*, pp 116-8, 138
- 97 Mukherjee, *op cit*, 116
- 98 *LIC Report on Coal*, p 80
- 99 Cf Giovanni Arrighi, 'International Corporations, Labour Aristocracies, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa' in Arrighi and John S. Saul, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*, M R Press 1973, p 120
- 100 *LIC Report on Coal*, pp 42-4
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- 103 *Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines for 1905*, p 2
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- 107 *Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines for 1921*, p 11
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- 110 *Op cit*, p 32, see also *RCLI Evidence*, vol V, Pt I, p 34
- 111 Mukherjee, *op cit*, pp 250-1
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- 114 B R Seth, *op cit*, p 244, and *BLEC Report*, vol II p 365
- 115 *LIC Report on Coal*, p 85 The managers were, however, not in favour of prohibition (*ibid*, p 85) It is revealing to note that in the early days of the industry the managements often supplied foreign liquor to mine workers to induce them to report to mining work (See Bengal Coal Co records)
- 116 *RCIL Evidence*, vol V, Pt I, pp 34, 36
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- 120 *Ibid*, p 190
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- 124 Whether it was really cheap and further, even if cheap, then cheap in what sense are complex issues requiring more critical discussion Cf Michael Burawey, 'Migrant Labour in South Africa and the United States' in Theo Nicols (eds), *Capital and Labour*, Fontana paperbacks, 1980, pp 140-3
- 125 *Coalfields Committee Report 1920* For aspects of rural links of jute labour see n 41 above and of tea plantation labour R Das Gupta, 'From Peasants and Tribesmen to Plantation Workers Colonial Capitalism and Reproduction of Labour Power and Proletarianization in North-East India (Early 1850s to 1947)', mimeo, presented to a Seminar organised by NEICSSR, Shillong, February, 1985
- 126 Cf Simeon, *op cit*
- 127 See, for example, the history of protective legislations as presented by Simmons, *op cit*, pp 190-96
- 128 Cf Kalpana Ram, 'The Indian working class and the peasantry - A review of current evidence on interlinks between the two classes' in Arvind Das *et al* (eds), *op cit*, p 183
- 129 *Coalfields Committee Report 1920*, ch V, para 53
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- 131 *Ibid*, p 26
- 132 *Ibid*, p 26
- 133 *Ibid*, p 24
- 134 See Morris David Morris, 'The Growth of Large-Scale Industry to 1947' in *Cambridge Economic History of India*, vol II, pp 653-55
- 135 Cf Lalita Chakraborty, 'Emergence of an Industrial Labour Force in a Dual Economy-British India, 1880-1920', *IESHR*, vol XV, No 3, pp 249-305
- 136 Gutman, *op cit*, pp 13-4
- 137 Cf Charles van Onselen, 'Workers Consciousness in Black Miners Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1920' in Cohen *et al* (eds), *op cit*, pp 114-18 A similar point was made by Anjan Ghosh in a talk given to a Seminar on Labour History organised by the History Department, Calcutta University
- 138 Cf Arrighi, 'International Corporations etc' in *op cit*, pp 113-14

Goya's Engraving's : Anatomy of A Subversive Aesthetic

TO WHAT EXTENT does an artist's creativeness consist in a major revolution in form or technique ? Can technical innovation by itself mean anything in isolation from important developments in the artist's relationship with the meaning of life itself ?

The searing intensities of Goya's aesthetic vision derive from a passionate Spanish temperament, but they stem no less from the vehemence of his social and moral responses. Critics have often traced the distinctive features of Goya's works to his personal suffering and isolation, imposed by deafness, and to a private world of macabre fantasies and nightmares. But this approach misses the essential point that it is precisely Goya's moral fervour—his loathing and horror of what man has made of man—that contributes to the power, depth and stature of his artistic output.

We find in Goya's works a curious interplay between the roles of fantasy and imagination on the one hand, and reason on the other. Goya's moral and intellectual assumptions and concerns belong—despite significant differences—broadly to the age of reason, but his stylistic attributes reveal an affinity with the approaching Romantic dawn, with its emphasis on the formal articulation of intense experiential states and on the free flight of imagination conjuring up forms from inner visions and fantasies, in defiance of classically endorsed contours.

Indeed Goya's artistic traits not only relate to late-eighteenth—and early-nineteenth-century post-classicism but also make him a forerunner of such twentieth-century tendencies as expressionism, surrealism and *avant-garde* tragic-comedy. There is, however, an important difference. Though shades of absurdism colour his manner and method, the ideological premises and moral instincts of Goya are the very obverse of much modernist doctrine. Whereas the absurdist insists that man, in a very basic, metaphysical sense, is an alien, a being isolated from outer reality which makes no sense to him, Goya—so his art suggests—considers the absurdities of the human predicament to be firmly rooted in a historically specific socio-cultural matrix.

Goya's achievement is all the more remarkable for it is without precedents in the artistic scenario of eighteenth-century Spain. The engravings

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of Goya's contemporaries are smooth, finished pieces, competently executed and technically impeccable, but at the same time they are depressingly conventional. Charles IV had encouraged the importation of engraving into Spain and set up the Royal Calcography at Madrid with the motivating idea of disseminating prints which supported officially sanctioned value codes amidst a wider public, with an emphasis on ornate miniatures and skillful calligraphy.

Goya subverts this imitative, polite and enervated tradition with explosive violence. He hurls defiance at the slavish replicators of visible reality and fashions a completely new idiom whose unique character depends upon its reliance on *distortion* as a mode of social and moral comment. Misshapen, exaggerated and animalistic variations on the human physiognomy and countenance permeate his graphic frames. Goya's art affords an inside view of the absurd, the radically strange, and the morally repugnant. As in Hogarth, but on an altogether different level, distortion becomes in Goya a way of perceiving the world as well as a strategy for adjudicating against it. In this sense Goya belongs to a great tradition of eighteenth—and nineteenth—century artists including Swift, Gogol, Dickens and Dostoyevski, in whom distortive treatment of the surface of reality combines with an intensely critical diagnostic realism of content. The black lines of an engraving serve Goya much better than the equipment of a florid colourist in his evocation of the morally dark world which is condemned in his etchings. Goya's revolutionary formal mode grows hand in hand with a revolutionary content, vividly affirming the fact that significant advances in technique are usually coextensive with corresponding leaps in consciousness.

The history of Goya's personal development as an etcher is a microcosmic version of the history of engraving in Spain. Beginning with conventional imitations of Valesquez, Goya strikes out in a totally unprecedented direction in his four major series, *The Caprices*, *The Disasters of War*, *Tauromachy* and *Disparates*. Goya's breakthrough as an engraver betokens the democratisation of fine arts. Engraving is in the same relation to pictorial art as printing is to the written word: the respective developments of both took them out of the courts and salons and made art and letters available to an emerging popular public. Goya seizes the advantage offered by this process: the subject matter of pictorial art is emancipated from the norms and confines assigned to it by ruling-class aesthetics and addresses the problems of common life.

In 1792 Goya suffered a serious illness which left him deaf for life, a circumstance that was to transform his life and work, enhancing his sensitivity to the lot of those who live in misery, wretchedness and deprivation. It produced an increasing alienation from the elite world into which he had, by virtue of his talent, graduated from his peasant origins. Returning to work after his illness, he seemed to have become an artist with a mission and a commitment. The result was a series of social satires which were published under the title *The Caprices*. Within a very short time, however, the prints had to be withdrawn after Goya incurred the ire of the Inquisition, so that early in his

career Goya was established as an artist at variance with officialdom

Satire of the eighteenth century variety evokes an essentially conservative form associated with the refined, decorous and witty lampoons of, say, Dryden and Pope. But in the hands of a Goya or a Swift satire is capable of attaining a corrosive intensity, whose characteristic feature is moral indignation. It is this angry, radical facet of the satiric mode that takes shape in Goya's first series. In *The Caprices* he mercilessly lashes out at human follies and vices as deviations from the path of reason, justice and enlightenment. Neither the 'follies and vices' nor 'reason' imply abstract moral categories. Ferrari commits an error in concluding that Goya's awareness of folly, viciousness and unreason in human life produces a general, sweeping condemnation of "Man"². Goya, I think, would decline to posit human nature as a peremptory and absolute determination. In reply to the abstract problematic *What is human nature?* he would pose the concrete counter-question: whose nature do you mean, that of the oppressed or the oppressor? The object of Goya's scathing indictment is not Man as a generalised entity, but the perversions of human nature and the absurdity of human conduct in the historically specific order of contemporary class society. Undoubtedly *The Caprices* attain universality as documents on the human condition in the ontological sense, but they refuse to divorce ontological issues from a concrete response to social phenomena.

The Caprices untold as free, somewhat loose rhapsodic musings—which nevertheless retain a unity of purpose—on such diverse themes as the idiocy of fashionable society, the falsehood of court culture, the incompetence of doctors and lawyers, the viciousness of the clergy, the inhumanity of the judicial machinery and the stupidity of superstition, dwelling with bitterness on the fact of social and economic iniquity.

Like Swift, Goya believes that man is an *animal rationis capax*—a creature capable of reason—but is appalled at the monstrosity, bestiality and irrationality which engage in a hostile dialogue with reason in the nature of man. "Fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters," writes Goya. "United with her she is the mother of all the arts and the source of their wonder."³ The key to the organising concept of *The Caprices* is provided by an etching which depicts Goya asleep at his drawing table, while in the surrounding darkness lurk the phantasmagoric forms of bizarre, evil-looking creatures. Goya's caption explains: "The dream of reason produces monsters."

Monstrosity, released by the slumber of human reason, had in Goya a subjective-psychological as well as an objective-social significance. A recurrent motif, which exemplifies the triumph of monsters over reason, is witchcraft. Goya ruthlessly strips the hold of prevailing superstitions and irrationalistic predilections on the contemporary Spanish mind. In his etchings the world of witchcraft, mythified by popular superstition, appears both absurd and sinister.

The technique of distortion, so germane to Goya's method, undergoes sustained development in *The Caprices*. Animal imagery predominates: men

merge into beasts, and beasts with symbolically anthropomorphic features signify the dehumanisation of man. Aristocrats, doctors, lawyers and priests assume the lineaments of asses. The artist in the service of the ruling class is portrayed as a court musician with a monkey's face performing for a luxuriating ass who listens to the music with a soulful look, while hangers-on applaud the spectacle from a distance. But the metaphoric use of animalistic images has a definite social content: the grotesqueness and animality of human features denounce the hegemony of a bestial, perverted, sub-rational order in society.

Some of the etchings darkly parody upper-class culture with its cults of fashion and romance. Goya presents an aristocrat receiving a pedicure; his toe-nail is etched in the shape of an exaggeratedly long and hooked claw, and repulsion is distinctly visible on the moorish face of the pedicurist. Such repulsion is not directed at some individual, its scope encompasses the ethos of an entire social class. The print entitled "Old Woman and a Gallant" depicts an old hag seated in a pose of mock regality; a genteel fop is bowing low before her. Despite the seeming deference with which he proffers his attentions, his lowered face suggests slyness and, perhaps, derisive laughter. The old woman's long hooked nose, exaggerated chin and thin lips are reminiscent of Goya's witches; her expression is disdainful, vain and coquettish. The falsity of the aristocratic "higher love", mystified by the literature of courtly romance, but in fact based on the power of position and wealth, lies exposed in this superbly ironic engraving. The woman portrayed, incidentally, is a thinly disguised caricature of Queen Maria Luisa, which could possibly explain the exclusion of this plate from the published edition of *The Caprices*.

Another deliberation on the absurdity and vanity of fashion is the portrait of an aristocratic old dame gazing into a mirror as she tries on a frilly bonnet. Her wizened features are exaggerated by the distortive quality of the mirror reflection. As usual, Goya imputes to the engraving a pithy, trenchant title that lends its irony a razor's edge. Entitled "Till death", the work operates on two levels, it is a philosophic reflection on the evanescent nature of human existence, as well as a caustic comment on the superficiality and absurdity of upper-class culture. Goya's penchant for invoking ultimate questions regarding life and death within a framework of cultural satire is likewise manifest in his portrayal of a genteel couple locked in an embrace, their exalted passion has literally consumed them—they are both dead. Such images of death related to the fashionable world function as metaphors for the decadence of aristocratic culture.

We note an interesting ambivalence in Goya's treatment of erotic subjects: on the one hand he embraces the secularised, humanistic, modern approach to sex as a normal, healthy, full-bodied human activity, in contrast to its prescription in the medieval Christian outlook, but on the other hand sexuality is linked in Goya's works with the degradation, perversion, commercialisation and alienation of man-woman relationships in the murky world of courts and salons. Marriages of convenience in elite society are

definitively symbolised in the engraving which shows a blindfolded woman unseeingly giving her hand to the highest bidder, while in the background hover the naked, starved figures of the populace. Goya sums up the sexual mores of the upper-classes in a series of pictures which give graphic reality to the ubiquity of rape. But, as successive engravings demonstrate, rape is only the epitomal manifestation of a widespread ethic and attitude, revealed, for instance, in an etching titled "Dream of Inconstancy", which recreates the perverted libidinous fantasies of a well-fed *debauche*.

Monks and priests are repeatedly caught in their gross, debauched and ridiculous moments. Their ascetic habits stand in an ironic relationship to the depravity of their sensualism. The depiction of their facial anatomy emphasises inner perversion: a priest's mouth opens in a leer revealing the blackness of a cavernous hole, relieved only by the dubious whiteness of prominent, misshapen teeth. Goya depicts a group of kneeling priests in an attitude of rapt devotion and piety. The object of their mindless adoration is a superior cleric who takes the shape of a parrot preaching from the elevation of a pulpit. The cryptic caption exclaims "What a golden beak!" This denunciation of institutionalised religion is charged with allusions to the Spanish Inquisition, so deeply hated by the progressive intelligentsia at Madrid—a fact that earned Goya the animosity of the Holy Office.

Goya's visual diatribe on abuses and social evils includes the theme of the education and the upbringing of the child. His treatment of the subject stems from an emerging enlightened approach to education which opposed the distortive effects of current pedagogic practices on the development of the human personality. We see a backward family obsequiously genuflecting before the teacher, entrusting a tiny infant to him. The fact of the teacher symbolises perversity, smugness and insensitivity—Goya makes plain that the education and socialisation of the child can, in such a situation, only be brutalising and degrading. A related plate focuses on the barbaric phenomenon of the battered child. A father is seen brutally lacerating his son's bared hindparts with his boot, while the child howls in agony. The man grips the boy's shirt between his teeth as a token of his bestiality. Continuing the theme, plates from the same period as *The Caprices*, depict convicts incarcerated in chains and shackles. Goya's condemnatory caption declares "The custody is as barbarous as the crime."

Ultimately *The Caprices* go beyond a criticism of isolated evils, abuses and institutions, and strike at the very basis of class society—its fundamental injustice and exploitativeness, its idolisation of money, its innately contradictory character, and its pervasive alienation. Goya grasps and repudiates the very essence of a burgeoning bourgeois culture in which money, with all its distortive power, is fast acquiring the status of a ruling deity. The image of a miser paranoically clutching and concealing his money bags in the etching titled "Why hide them?" relates the traditional Christian strictures on avarice to the dehumanising ethic of possessive individualism in the modern bourgeois epoch. More disturbing is the engraving which Goya with dark humour calls "Tooth-searching." A woman has climbed a scaffold in order

to extract a gold tooth from the mouth of a hanging corpse. Our moral response to the action is guided by the woman's own divided attitude and inner conflict. The expression of alarm and horror on her face represents not only a reaction to the physical fact of the corpse but also, arguably, to her own moral perversion—an interpretation corroborated by the fact that the woman has averted her face even as she gropes in the dead man's mouth, as if to avoid seeing her own deed. Ultimate problems are posed in this dark perception of the value system of a money-obsessed humanity which does not hesitate to make capital even out of death.

Goya penetrates the fundamental contradictions of class society as he ruminates on its iniquities. An etching which eloquently articulates the sufferings of the common people depicts two poor men bent under the weight of a pair of socially privileged asses. That the asses have in reality an externally 'human' form is revealed in comparable etching which portrays two ancient aristocrats astride the shoulders of oppressed human beings whose skull-like features pronounce their condition of death in life. Goya's caption—"What one does to another"

4 Goya's calculatedly ambivalent style evokes an eloquent fusion of the absurd and the tragic. This is seen in an engraving which reveals a high society beauty raising her skirt to inspect her stylish shoe, while a penurious old woman, stares at this alien sight with eyes that bespeak wonder, perplexity and also resentment at the strange order of the world.

Thus *The Caprices* start out as reformatory satirisations of individual evils and follies, but as the series progresses their scope is dilated to a point where Goya's absurdist perceptions question the rationality and moral acceptability of all established morality, religion and law, and hit at the very root of existing socio-economic relations.

In *The Caprices* Goya has already arrived at a dim view of human potentialities as reflected in man's social existence. Goya is too conscious of human reality to subscribe either to the confident rationalism of eighteenth-century neo-classicists and Encyclopaedists, or to the facile optimism and progress utopias of the Romantics and the early bourgeois period in general. He is deeply disturbed by the yawning gap that he finds existing between the idealistic Enlightenment conception of man's nature and the frightening form human 'essence' has taken in the course of its actual historical evolution.

This pessimism about human nature is deepened and intensified in Goya's second series, *The Disasters of War*. The development from *The Caprices* to *The Disasters* represents a transition from the acid but nevertheless witty world of satire to a nightmarish context of horror.

With Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808 Goya's hopes of a Spanish society progressing by the light of reason collapsed abruptly. War emerges in Goya as the crystallised form of man's collective savagery, a sort of endemic madness that incarnates the capitulation of reason in human social life. Goya etches like a man possessed, from a deeply felt compulsion to voice a protest against what he sees around him. "This I saw" declare his horrified captions,

"And this too " When his servant asked him, "Why do you paint these barbarities that men commit ?" Goya replied, "To tell men forever that they should not be barbarians "1

Goya and his rationalist friends, who had been inspired by the progressive ideas of the French Encyclopaedists, felt depressed and bitter at the fact that the French had now embarked upon the road of imperial expansion and global domination under the leadership of a dictator. Goya's engravings and canvases commemorate his "burning desire to perpetuate by means of the brush the most notable and heroic actions and scenes of our glorious insurrection against the tyrant of Europe "2 What is noteworthy is Goya's sustained avoidance of any lionisation of the official Spanish army. His only heroes are the courageous ordinary men and women who carried on their desperate but glorious guerrilla war, almost unarmed, in face of the overwhelmingly superior forces of the invader.

Goya is totally free of narrow chauvinism, but his plates are vitalised by a fervent nationalistic sentiment based on a passionate love of liberty, and he upholds the validity of exterminating such an adversary in his etching depicting a Spanish mob dragging a French officer's body by a rope. Goya gives his unflinching judgement "He deserved it "3

While honouring it, Goya steers clear of any romanticisation of the Spanish resistance. The war is depicted as a bloody affair throughout. But he does not subscribe to a simplistic and moralistic pacifism. From his engravings it is plain that violence can be resisted, unfortunately, only by violence, that non-resistance to evil only compounds it, that in a struggle such as this the man of conscience, if he is to be true to himself, is compelled to take sides. Goya's moral judgement—which, given the social background of a middle-class artist and intellectual of his time, is remarkably radical—is implicit in the way he sees the conflicting forces. This comes through powerfully in the famous engraving which depicts a pair of Spanish peasants confronting the might of superior military technology with their weak and primitive weapons. Goya's picture has grasped the historic significance of this encounter. The moral and ideological stand of this work flows from the tension between sticks and guns, between spontaneous resistance and organised terror.

But the dominant mood of *The Disasters* is not celebrative, it is an amalgamation of desolation, lamentation, and naked fury. Goya's impressions of war come through as a number of staccato utterances that cohere in the totality of a terrible montage—in which the artist graphically documents the despoilation and devastation of an entire people.

The series opens on an insidiously quiet note with a plate entitled "Sad presentiments of what must come to pass " In the centre of the picture Goya has portrayed a man in tattered clothes, kneeling, hands held in a gesture denoting despair and hopelessness. His eyes are cast up towards the sky, as though he apprehends some terrible blow from above. Much of the power of the print lies in Goya's suggestive use of the *chiaroscuro* effect: the illuminated figure of the man is surrounded by menacing, hazy shadows which contain a

sinister suggestion of nameless monsters peering out of the darkness at their designated victim

This is followed by forty-six plates illustrating the atrocities of man's internecine violence, and another six on the devastating famine that ensued during wartime. The tragedy of human loss becomes intensely meaningful for the viewer through its personal significance for someone in the engraving—an orphaned child, a bereaved mother, sister or husband. Faith-shattering images make palpable man's limitless talent for collective cruelty. "Why?" such things should happen.

The claim of man to reason and humanity has been jettisoned and finally lost in purposeless but organised ferocity. The high degree of orchestration, cerebration and discipline needed in modern warfare—a degree of organisation of which only the 'social' and 'rational' being called man is capable—appears in Goya's plates in perplexing contradiction with bestiality and mindlessness.

The plate, "Heroic deeds 'Against dead men'", shows a landscape with mutilated corpses. From a branch of a tree hangs the naked inverted body of man, like a carcass in a butcher's shop. The arms and the head have been hacked and decoratively arranged on a nearby branch. The amputated human body has an equivalent in the truncated branches of the stark, desolate tree. Men and trees have been subjected to a parallel devastation. The static power of Picasso's *Guernica* pales beside these images of the dismemberment of the human personality.

The overarching sense of the madness of war is encapsulated in the plate titled "Ravages of War". Goya depicts a room littered with objects and human bodies, among them the corpse of a beautiful woman, raped before being murdered. From somewhere above a human figure and a chair hurtle downward to complete this comprehensive image of radical chaos in human life.

One manifestation of war's moral chaos is the perpetration of atrocities on women. Goya's engravings reveal something of his attitude to how one faces the existence of evil in the world. He does not present women as the passive victims of their persecutors' rapacity, instead they are revealed in active, necessarily violent resistance of the brutish embraces of the invaders. Goya's captions express the fighting attitude of his women protagonists. "They do not wait to. Nor they. Nor these." And in the inspired etching titled "What Courage" Goya pays homage to the nameless heroes and heroines of the Spanish resistance through his depiction of a lone woman firing a cannon after all the gunners have been killed around her.

Goya's obsession with the motif of death reaches a crescendo in *The Disasters of War*. Goya of *The Disasters* is confounded by the impenetrable problem of life in the face of the finality and pervasiveness of death, what does life mean? Goya's answer in one of his most eerie pieces is "Nothing". Skeletal remains rise from a tomb. Bony fingers clutch a placard on which is inscribed the message *nada*, the Spanish word for 'nothing'. "Nothing".

implies a resolute denial of the consolatory notion of an after-life and a melancholy reflection on the meaninglessness and futility of war. Death is the terminal riddle of human existence, the unfathomable universal potentiality for non-being immanent in all manifestations of life. But the phenomenon of death also implies for Goya those social and historical forces which abrogate life and proliferate death. War, portrayed in one of the plates as the looming darkness of a "carnivorous vulture", is identified as the predator of life and the destroyer of meaning, leaving in its wake only the vacuity of nothingness.

Goya's conception is by no means nihilistic. There ultimately exists a rich positive relationship between Goya's apprehension of the nullity implied by death and his catechism of life-destroying forces. His preoccupation with death and the forces of death gains meaning and significance precisely because its opposite, life, is the ultimate criterion of meaning affirmed by his art.

The war ended with the triumph of reaction in Spain. Ferdinand, who had stooped to exhibitions of utter sycophancy to the French Emperor and had declared his desire to become "the adoptive son of H. M. the Emperor"⁶ now returned to power. Spain was resubjugated to a regime of repression and terror which crushed protest, purged liberals (including Goya), and resorted to a policy of systematic persecution of the forces of protest. Goya, now 65 and stone deaf, left Madrid for Piedrahita *en route* to the Portuguese border with the declared "intention of making (his) way to a free country."⁷ The Minister of Police threatened to impound the property of Goya's entire family if he did not return immediately and he was left with no alternative but to comply for the moment. Later he decided to flee to France, leaving behind the plates of *The Disasters of War* which remained unpublished during his lifetime.

The experience of the war and the reign of terror further radicalized Goya's sensibility. War and death are now apprehended as integral components of a total power structure, a whole unjust scheme of things. Goya's images assault the guignolesque masters of an oppressive state machinery, including the Church which actively connived in the reprisals against the liberals and radicals. A plate indicting all those forces which are "contrary to the general interest" depicts a diabolic figure inscribing edicts in a calendar of laws. Through such images Goya delivers his comment on the demonism of the ruling powers. The people are coerced to bow before monstrous new masters, portrayed as beasts of prey. We see the people kneeling to a wolf who writes the contemptuous taunt "Wretched humanity the fault is yours." Like the alienating device in a Brechtian play, the edict conveys an unmistakable message: if the people are governed by oppressive and brutal masters, they are themselves to blame for accepting this subjugation. Goya repeatedly voices exhortations against passive suffering, in one plate of a waif who, like some insubstantial apparition, extends his hand for alms, Goya says briefly "The worst is to beg."

Perhaps the most moving as well as ideologically perceptive of these pic-

torial essays on poverty, human suffering and social discrimination, is a plate which depicts a hollow-cheeked man bewailing his dead relations as a pair of aristocrats regard the spectacle with aloofness and contempt. Their attitude to their wretched fellow-human is conveyed by the ironical caption "Do they belong to a different?" In Goya's engraving, an unbridgeable abyss separates the poor man from the alienating eyes of the affluent duo who view him and his dead family with a gaze that fails to acknowledge their common humanity. Goya's humanistic conviction of the indissoluble bond that connects one human being with another is the implicit counterblast to this dehumanised philosophy which rationalises the degradation, exploitation and even extermination of a subject race or class by questioning its very claim to humanity.

Goya's etchings thus reveal in their analysis of social phenomena a degree of radicalism that goes far beyond the liberal progressivism of the middle-class rationalists in contemporary Madrid, testifying that the artist's "hunger for truth" (Lukacs) often leads to insights which are inexplicable in terms of the artist's overt ideological framework.

By the end of the war Goya was a deeply disillusioned man. Reaction had triumphed, liberty was dead and truth was fraught with danger. Man's nature had been exposed in a frightening, subhuman aspect. The last prints in *The Disasters* despondently attempt to come to terms with a world in which a "Fierce monster" devours the tiny limbs and bones of human children, a world in which, as one of the last plates allegorises, humanity gazes at the spectacle of "Truth", in the guise of a woman, lying dead. Yet, amazingly, even after all that he has seen, suffered and damned, Goya does not abandon the precarious hope of reason and humanity prevailing in the end. Even as he pronounces the death of Truth, he wonders expectantly "Will she rise again?" And the concluding cadenza of this gruesome symphony is beatific and serene. An etching titled "This is the truth" opens a window on Goya's visionary (and some would say unrealistic) ideal. Truth, once again personified as a woman, has been resurrected. She points out the path of peace, work and harmony to a peasant who holds in his hand the spade which denotes his activity as a labourer. A sheep gazes benignly at this pacific pastoral scene as the sun lights up the sky to adumbrate the mood of hope and affirmation.

Thus, though Goya of *The Disasters* is pessimistic investigator of the barbarity and irrationality of man as a social animal, his negative judgements are nowhere actuated by misanthropy. As in the case of Swift, Goya's loathing and horror emanates from a profoundly humanistic impulse to retrieve men from the mad course on which he has embarked and restore to him the rationality, dignity and nobility of which he is capable.

The prevailing political climate after the end of the war was inhibitive to an art of direct ideological statement. In the third phase of his activity as an etcher Goya, by now 68, sought refuge in a safe theme. *Tauromachy*, the traditional Spanish art of bull fighting. Some of the plates seem matter of fact or even glorificatory of this national sport. In any case the motifs of blood and

death continue to haunt Goya's imagination in these depictions of expert matadors and possessed mobs lancing to death the reckless beast who never stands a chance in this unequal conflict between brain and brawn. The same effect is generated by the etching entitled "The dogs let loose on the bull." The only thing comparable to the effect produced here in the work of Goya's contemporary compatriots is the engraving by Ametller—included in the National Gallery exhibition—named "The hunting of an ostrich" which vividly etches the crazed joy gleaming in the eyes of a group of people competing to be the slayers of a terrorised bird.

In his final phase—perhaps the most complex and enigmatic in his development as an engraver—Goya creates a world which eludes definitive formulation. The series is entitled *Disparates*. The Spanish word *Disparates* connotes folly, absurdity, insanity. Goya, who began with reason as his point of departure, now gravitates towards its very opposite as he explores a shadowy world of demonism, absurdity and madness. Goya's intellectual dilemma at this point of his development illustrates the paradoxical situation wherein the ascendancy of the world-view of reason, espoused by the emergent bourgeoisie is undermined in practice by the same bourgeois world with, on the one hand, the breakdown of the traditional fideistic conception of life, and, on the other, the spread of irrationalism, violence and contradictions in actual human social existence. Goya involves his audience in his privileged insight into the world of destructive monsters, terrors and unreason which was coming into being in his lifetime, and which he comprehended with prophetic foresight. We who live in times when the whole human race can, in a moment, be annihilated by a lunatic pushing a button, are the inheritors of this apocalyptic prophecy.

How do we grasp the meaning of the elusive *Disparates*? Do we simply give up the struggle even before embarking upon it, by declaring with Ferrari that these works are great because no meaning can be read into them? Yet Ferrari contradicts himself in the same breath by reading a definite meaning into the *Disparates*, which he believes to be a case of the disillusioned, tired and aged artist escaping "from the painful world of reality into an asylum in the world of dream."⁸ Arguing along similar lines, the American critic Richard Schickel sees the *Disparates* as a turning away from objective reality into an essentially "private hell,"⁹ a tortured inner world of subjective chaos and psychopathology. Such interpretations, though they contain an element of truth, are considerably reductive of the complexity with which the *Disparates* operate on many levels. They totally fail to recognise the social responsiveness which, far from being absent from these supposedly "subjective" works, is the precise force behind their moral energy.

A glance at the historical context in which Goya created these concluding masterpieces helps in elucidating their meaning. Spain, which had resisted a foreign invader at a terrible cost, now lay under the shadow of tyranny at home. The rationalist intellectuals who had befriended Goya in better times were all in exile and the king was surrounding himself with lackeys and reactionaries whose *raison d'être* was to vindicate and uphold an anachronistic absolutist regime. Against this background, folly, absurdity and insanity

crystallise in Goya's works as the all-embracing ethos of contemporary social conditions. Openly political art is impossible in this atmosphere of censorship and persecution. In such a situation how else would the artist assault the existing state of affairs but through a strategy of indirection? Thus, while it is true that the *Disparates* descend into dark, antemosaic recesses of human consciousness, the fact remains that Goya's preoccupation with the irrational is at the same time his way of militating against the absurdity of existence in a real historical environment. Intimations of social absurdity in the *Disparates* resolve into a perception of the world as the abode of madness. The bizarre ambience evoked here proclaims the *ad absurdum* of a world of surreal, preposterous and contradictory relationships.

Goya's earlier proposition (that the dream of reason produces monsters) remains the controlling idea in these works too. Mankind has abandoned reason. The notion of madness which predominates in *Disparates*, as is borne out by several of the engravings, has a manifest social significance. Consider for example the etching "Folly of Fear." We see a group of people grovelling in the mud. The source of their terror is twofold: the military officer to the right whose raised sword threatens and, on the left, the looming, gigantic, ghost-like figure in a hooded shroud, who descends upon them in a scene that expresses the paranoia of a nightmare. Another equally violent illustration which looks back to the *Disasters*, portrays a Frenchman trampling a man with his boots.

The quality of the imagery in many of these plates—with their subtle suggestion of unreal fantasms lurking in the shades, and their use of visuals to evoke a sense of unearthly terror and of uncontrolled violence simmering just beneath a deceptively quiet surface—make Goya a precursor of surrealism as well as modern cinema. Moreover, such effects are not mere technical *tours de force*, they are the vehicles of Goya's intuitional as well as philosophic response to the monstrous irrationality and violence that reside deep in the soul of man.

"Pure madness" brings palpably to life a world of howling creatures and delirious orgies which epitomises the dark side of religion in an image of monks threatening a kneeling wretch with the fires of Hell. "General folly," summing up the social criticism of the *Disparates*, projects an inclusive image of the whole human race gone mad.

The notion of insanity is exploited within a complex, double-edged conceptual structure. On the one hand the frenzies and deliriums of the mad serve as metaphors for unreason in human social life. But on the other hand madness also has a positive value as a form of protest against restrictive superstructural constructs, an assertion of freedom from the frequently spurious rationality of the classical age, which, as emerge in Foucault, was often nothing but a rationale for a hierarchical, absolutist and oppressive *status quo*. Madness in *Disparates* is, at one and the same time, a symptom and symbol of insane objective conditions, an inward refuge from the horrors of the outside world, and a revolt against the hegemonic domination of an officially sponsored rationalism. Goya violently negates the *polité*, decorous

and orderly world mythified as an age of reason, and exposes the hollowness of this self-image of the eighteenth century

Goya's preoccupations in *Disparates* are integral to a wider phenomenon—the paradoxical problem of the obsessive engagement with madness in the discourse of the age of reason.¹⁰ The wide incidence of mental breakdown amongst intellectuals of this period is no coincidence. Medical insanity, as modern statistical research indicates, is not merely a matter of the disintegration of the subjective unity of the individual *qua* individual, but is often directly proportional to loss of cohesion and adjustment in the outer world of social interactions and relationships, reaching a peak in periods of severe crisis such as world wars. The eighteenth-century phenomenon is a pointer to the fact that the birth pangs of the bourgeois world are symbolically subsumed within the ambience of widespread neurosis. The binary opposition of 'reason' and 'madness', carried implications that were not so much ideal as ideological. As Hart suggests in *The Psychology of Insanity*, and as Foucault's findings in *Madness and Civilization* convincingly substantiate, the classical age viewed madness within a "political conception".¹¹ Neo-classical culture ultimately derived its values of regularity and obedience to rules in all walks of life, via Boileau, from the authoritarian model of Louis XIV's regime in France. Madness, enthusiasm and excess stood at the outer edge of this polite and proper world, as a refusal to conform to its norms and constraints. The adherents of the light of reason saw madness as a realm of inscrutable darkness—a darkness linked with irreligion, satanism and licentiousness. The delirious frenzies of the madman bespoke a spirit of liberated animality. Defying accepted rationality, he chose to pursue the rhetoric of a private logic. His delusions reflected dangerous aspirations—the mad man often declared that he was the king. There was in this period an indissoluble link between madness, poverty, idleness and discontent. Hence, in the age of reason the classic response to and solution of the problem of madness was confinement. Madmen, indigents, libertines, criminals and political troublemakers were clubbed together in a world of dungeons and chains. This stratagem made discontent invisible. It also provided cheap labour in times of crisis, since duty and moral obligation here took the form of an insistence on universal productivity. The madman distinguished himself from the other outcasts of society by his refusal even in the asylum to fall in with the work-schedule of this forced labour camp.

Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson and Foucault have shown how, in different contexts, madness was a form of protest in the age of reason, and that many of the foremost radicals used madness and prophecy as a cloak in the manner of Hamlet. Against this background in which neo-classical intellectuals like Dryden, Swift and Johnson equated madness with popular rule and insurrection, and a poet like Blake appropriated the credo of madness to confound and overturn establishment conceptions of reason, morality and law, as well as the structures of authority they sustained, we may appreciate the full significance of Goya's *Disparates*. Let us consider, for instance, the engraving titled "A madness of the poor". The left corner of the frame reveals a group of old paupers and destitutes, to the right stands a man

whose wig announces his elite status. Mediating dialectically between these two extremities of the social ladder is a poor woman dancing with bared breasts in a stance which expresses jubilation and abandonment. Here is a vibrant image of those underprivileged individuals who have torn asunder the shackles of officially prescribed orderliness, and whose spirited defiance provides an exemplar to other members of their social class.

Several of the 'madness' engravings demonstrate not only the horror and darkness, but also laughter and fun. The frame of the engraving "Merry Madness" is filled by happy, rejoicing people holding hands and dancing in a circle—the geometrical figure which is traditionally emblematic of concord, and which occurs in so many of Goya's works. The etching entitled "Carnival Madness" depicts a gathering of common folk watching with absorption the antics of a dancing duo who are performing in characteristic carnival masks. The merriment, conviviality and good-fellowship embodied in the scene recall Bakhtin's observations on carnivals, animal epics and laughter, in which he identifies the significance of laughter in folk culture as a means of combating the concepts, images, symbols and discipline of ruling class culture. "Laughter", writes Bakhtin, "overcomes fear, for it knows no inhibition, no limitations. Its idiom is never used by violence and authority. (It) is the social consciousness of all the people (signifying) the defeat of power, of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts."

The trio of madness, spontaneity and laughter functions as a negatory protest against ruling-class "reason". But it also constitutes a positive alternative *weltanschauung* which acquires special meaning given the historical context of spontaneous popular uprisings all over Europe in this entire period from the 1750s right up to 1848, with the concomitant ascendancy of a culture from below. Thus we find Goya rejecting the ideological premises of a "high art" which prides itself in its separation from "low brow" entertainment forms, and drawing on popular cultural sources to invigorate, enrich and democratise his art. Near the end of his life Goya created a wonderful lithograph called "The Andalusian Dance" which celebrates the vibrance, zest and sheer *joe de vivre* embodied in the haunting flamenco music and dancing of the freedom-loving Spanish gypsies. A work such as this testifies by its marked contrast to the sombre, grim and bizarre projections which pervade much of his artistic output, that Goya's crusade against human barbarism, injustice and unreason is actuated not as Ferrari supposes by a hatred of Man in *genere*, but precisely by his faith in the joy and beauty which life can attain, and by his ardent commitment to what he would term 'humanity'.

ern Art, New Delhi, which I visited on 30th June, 1985. I have not confined its scope to the National Gallery exhibits but have attempted a general examination of the themes and concerns of Goya's engravings

- 2 Enrique Lafuente Ferrari, *Goya His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs* (London Thames and Hudson, 1962), p. II
- 3 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. VIII
- 4 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. XVI
- 5 Quoted in Pierre Gassier and Juliet Wilson, *Goya His Life and Work* (London Thames and Hudson, 1971), p. 223
- 6 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 212
- 7 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 224
- 8 Ferrari, *op cit.*, p. III
- 9 Richard Schickel, *The World of Goya* (New York Time-Life Books, 1968), p. 116
- 10 It is not feasible to go into details here, I have written a paper on this phenomenon with reference to English literature in the age of reason, where the preoccupation with madness as an ideological conception is found in the writings of, among others, Dryden, Swift, Johnson, Cowper, Collins, Smart and Blake
- 11 Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity* (Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 18
- 12 Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (Harmondsworth Penguin Books, 1978), E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963 rep. Harmondsworth Penguin Books, 1968), and Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York Random House, 1965)
- 13 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, quoted in Maynard Solomon (ed.), *Marxism and Art Essays Classic and Contemporary* (Brighton, Sussex Harvester Press Ltd., 1979), p. 294

DISCUSSION

Modes of Power : Some Ambiguities

PARTHA CHATTERJEE'S Communication—'Modes of Power Some Clarifications' (*Social Scientist* No 141, February 1985)—continues the process of theoretical development of the concept of 'Modes of Power' begun in *Subaltern Studies-I* and elaborated in 'More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry' in *Subaltern Studies-II*. It should be read together with the earlier exposition because many of the ambiguities in the formulation of the concept have been recognised and an attempt has been made to grapple with them. However, many of the problems which were pointed out in the earlier review of Chatterjee's contribution (Section IX of 'Subaltern Studies-II' *Social Scientist* No 137, October 1984) have still not been satisfactorily resolved or even confronted.

Partha Chatterjee says that his analysis is firmly rooted in the Marxist tradition and is compatible with the concept of modes of production. Certain grave problems are however involved in this. Not only is this compatibility based on a selective set of criteria but the formulations advanced by him are internally inconsistent.

The very definition of 'Mode of Power' is laden with ambiguities. Quoting from Balibar that a mode of production can be analysed in terms of the double nature of division of labour—the technical and the social—he criticises historians for ignoring the relations of production and only concentrating on the importance of the productive forces which he characterises as 'techno-economic determinism' (His criticism of the work of Irfan Habib, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra in *Bengal 1920-1947 The Land Question*, Calcutta, 1984 is also along these lines). According to him, while adequate categories for the study of productive forces exist, this is not so for the relations of production. The concept of Modes of Power was developed to fill this lacuna—"These modes are distinguished in terms of the basis of the specification of the 'property' connection (the relations of production)." (*Subaltern Studies-II*, p. 317). His criticism of 'orthodox' Marxism is misplaced as both the structures of productive forces (real or material appropriation connection) and that of relations of production (property connection) are relations of labourers, means of production and non-labourers which are reconstituted theoretically for analysis. A proper study of any mode of pro-

duction therefore cannot be carried out by emphasising either the productive forces or the relations of production. For comprehending the complex totality of production we have not only to analyse the relationship between these invariant constituent elements of any mode of production along these two axes but also the relationship (correspondence or non-correspondence) of these

The works on the 'transition' from feudalism to capitalism have been criticised for emphasising the importance of the development of the productive forces in the transition to the exclusion of the relations of production. But here again he is tilting at windmills. It is a common assumption in the transition debate that the development of capitalist relations of production preceded by one to two centuries the development of a specifically capitalist labour process—the industrial organisation of production. It was the transformation of the relations of production from serfdom to wage labour—analysed by Marx as 'The Primitive Accumulation of Capital'—that led to the creation of a capitalist market and large scale production based on this market for subsistence commodities.

Giving importance to the labour process leads to grave 'praxiological problems' for Partha Chatterjee. However, in the transitional non-correspondence phase of a mode of production, the relationship between the relations of production and the labour process is no longer the stable function of reciprocal limitation but became the transformation of one by the effect of the others. Praxis is a complex act of intervention in a determinate mode of production. It is well to bear in mind Marx's statement that history sets itself only those tasks which it can solve. While Partha Chatterjee accepts that Marx's analysis of the labour process is not 'techno-economic determinism', he seems hesitant about accepting its importance for the determination of 'the specific characteristics of the capitalist state or bourgeois ideology or proletarian consciousness'. Here again certain qualifications can be made. The specificity of the organisation of production under capitalism in which capital—both object of labour and means of labour—confronts the labourers, means that the process of surplus appropriation is contained in the process of production. It is this which leads to the separation of the sphere of civil society and the economy in the capitalist mode of production. The point can be comprehended more clearly if we contrast it with the labour process in feudalism where the unity of the labourers and the means of production resulted in the process of surplus appropriation being extra-economic or political in nature—which meant a more specific intervention of the political instance in the economic. Similarly the whole study of the fetishism of commodities in *Capital*, vol. 1 is based on the specific characteristics of the labour process under capitalism and the alienation of labour power peculiar to it. Lenin's critique of spontaneity was based on the effect of this reification of the labour process on proletarian consciousness. The revisionist tendency of the Second International as well as the reformism of the labour aristocracy was traced by him to this as well as to the transition from absolute to relative surplus value. Any way, as stated above, the analysis of a determinate mode of production cannot be confined to examining either the relations or the forces

of production but has to examine production in its totality

The circularity of argument can be seen clearly in the discussion of the determination of the political and ideological instances in the last instance—the economic level, and on the base/superstructure metaphor (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 54-55). The reviewers' 'declaration' of the primacy of the economic instance is being taken to mean that other levels were of "residual" importance. After the usual arguments about the mutual interaction and relative autonomy of the different instances of the mode of production Partha Chatterjee concedes that "if one insists", the economic level can be granted determination in the last instance.

In the original review, the work of Emmanuel Terray and Maurice Godelier had been used to show that the economic level was determinant in the last instance because it determined which of the instances of the mode of production was dominant. It is heartening to note that after his initial misgivings there is agreement between Partha Chatterjee and the reviewers on this point. As far as the categories base/superstructure are concerned it is rightly said that it is a "metaphor". The categories are used as a convenient shorthand for the economic instance on the one hand and the political-ideological instances on the other. Use of this metaphor does not mean reductionism in the least. Perhaps the word 'base' is associated with a monolithic infrastructure of 'the base'. The base or the economic infrastructure as it is called, is itself a complex unity as outlined above, of relations and forces of production. Anyway as Marx emphasised in the 'introduction' to *The Grundrisse*, the point of departure for any analysis is social production which determines the other instances.

After the declarations about the relative autonomy of the different levels in a mode of production, the argument advanced takes an about turn and the reviewers are criticised for being hesitant to accept that "property relations are only the legal expression of the relations of production" and that "each can stand in the place of the others". According to Chatterjee, in the synchronous state of a mode of production "each instance corresponds to every others. They are in harmony" (*Social Scientist*, No 141 p 56)—while in the transitional non-correspondence phase of a mode of production there are contradictions and antagonisms between the various levels. According to him the relative autonomy of the different levels of a mode of production exists only in the transitional phase of non-correspondence of the various levels.

These formulations based on Etienne Balibar's contribution to *Reading Capital* are a distortion of his text. Balibar repeatedly reiterates that even in the correspondence phase, the various instances or levels of a mode of production do not relate to each other as simple translation or transposition of one to another, but the correspondence between the levels is a complex set of interventions. The mode of 'correspondence' between the different levels is the mode of articulation of these levels and not the expression or reflection of one in another. In fact, seeing the relation between relations of production and legal forms as a relation of interchangeability is the worst form of reduc-

tionist mechanical determinism as in it the political—ideological instance *reflects* the economic relationships. The correspondence of the different levels of a social structure is not a simple connection but the mode of intervention of one practice within limits determined by others. There is no general form of correspondence between the levels but a heterogeneity of forms whose articulation depends on the degree of autonomy of the particular practice or instance with respect to another. Balibar devotes one full section ‘what is property’ (*Reading Capital*, p 226-233) to making a distinction between the relations of production and their legal forms. If both are conflated together, what will happen to the relative autonomy of the different levels? Firstly, the relations of production are not empirically given but have to be analysed and disentangled from the legal forms of these relations which have the effect of masking the actual relations. For example, in the capitalist mode of production from the legal point of view, there exist two relations. Firstly, property or the relations between persons and things. Secondly, contract or the relations between persons and persons. But these two distinct legal forms mask a different reality at the economic level. The ownership of means of production and productive wage labour defines a single connection or relation of production. The dislocation between the relations of production and their legal forms was central to Marx’s criticism of the trinity formula of wages-profit-rents as the expression of capitalist relations of production. Therefore, it is *totally* incorrect to state that in the correspondence phase of the mode of production, the relations of production and their legal expressions can “stand in the place of the others” (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 56).

As far as the phase of transition or non-correspondence of the different levels of a mode of production is concerned, it is assumed by Partha Chatterjee that this leads to contradictions and antagonisms which can only be conceptualised by conceding to each level a certain relative autonomy. But as has been indicated above, both in the correspondence and non-correspondence phases, the relationship between the different levels is not one of transposition but of a determinate mode of intervention and its effectivity. In the correspondence phase, the mode of effectivity of the political—economic levels is to ensure the reproduction of the economic level—the relationship therefore is one of reciprocal limitation. While in the non-correspondence phase the determination of effects is the transformation of one by the effectivity of the other. In both the cases the different levels are relatively autonomous. It is wrong to suggest that in the correspondence phase they are “legal expressions” while in the non-correspondence phase they have relative autonomy.

The problem noted in the earlier review of the conflation of the concept of modes of power with the political instance has not been solved in Partha Chatterjee’s *Communications*. According to him in order to analyse a transitional situation, each instance of a mode of production—the economic, the political, the ideological—has to be conceptualised “as an autonomously constituted theoretical field. It is in this context, as preliminary conceptualisation of the political instance, that the concept of the mode of power is offered—it seeks to develop a conceptual tool for analysing one, viz, the

political aspect of transitions from one mode of production to another" (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 56-57) Several problems arise if we accept these arguments Firstly, it would suggest that the concept of the mode of power is situated as a regional political structure in the wider concept of the mode of production How can this definition of modes of power be reconciled with the alternative conception of these modes being "distinguished in terms of the basis of specification of the 'property' connection (the relations of production) in the ordered and repeated performance of social activities" (*Subaltern Studies-II* p 317) Obviously, this is not possible till there is conflation of the two instances—"property" connection or relations of production as being part of the economic instance and "the 'property' connection, i.e., the question of rights or entitlements in society, of the resultant power relationships, of law and politics" (*Subaltern Studies-II*, p 316 and (*Social Scientist* No 141 p 54) as being part of the political instance But if the mode of power is situated in both the economic as well as the political instance, how are we to conceptualise each instance—the economic, the political and the ideological—as an "autonomously constituted theoretical field" (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 56) Secondly, it would appear that modes of power have been conceptually developed to especially comprehend the transitional or non-correspondence phase of the mode of production in which the autonomy of levels is very important So, on the one hand we are told that in the correspondence phase the relations of production and their legal expressions can stand for each other While in the non-correspondence phase when the different levels are not in harmony but in contradiction with each other, the appropriate category for analysing the political instance is the mode of power But this mode of power itself is constituted on the basis of "the 'property' connection (relations of production)" Therefore, again, both the economic and the political levels are conflated together In the communication Partha Chatterjee still talks of "developing appropriate concepts for analysing the different aspects of the social relations of production" (p 54) Probably further working on the concept of the modes of power will enable him to clear up this confusion about the "property" connection as relations of production and a system of power as well as the question of autonomy of levels being related to certain phases in the temporality of a mode of production and not to other phases

Certain problems are also encountered in the application of the concept of mode of power to historical modes of production Partha Chatterjee takes exception to the criticism that slavery and serfdom which are both shown as constitutive of the 'feudal mode of power', are therefore characterised as belonging to the same mode of production But here the confusion of the categories which constitute modes of power is to blame If modes of power are "distinguished on the basis of the specification of the 'property' connection (relations of productions)", then failing to distinguish between slavery and serfdom will obviously open him to the charge of considering the relations of production in them to be the same If the mode of power is a "conceptualisation of the political instance" then being part of the complex

totality of the mode of production where "each instance corresponds to every other" also would mean that the same political instance (feudal mode of power) corresponds to—indeed "can stand" for—the relations of production of slavery and serfdom. Both ways we end up with a similar problem.

According to Partha Chatterjee the way out of this impasse is to consider the political instance corresponding to slavery and serfdom as the "contradictory combination" (*Social Scientist* No 141, p. 57) of the communal and the feudal modes of power, with the form of combination varying in the two cases. The communal mode of power has been defined as a mode in which all allocation of social rights of the individual is "mediated by his existence as member of this community" (*Subaltern Studies-II*, p. 332, *Social Scientist* No 141, p. 57). According to him one has to look at historical situations of instituted relations of class exploitation in pre-capitalist societies in terms of the categorical opposites *community/external domination*. (*Subaltern Studies-II* p. 333). It is thus very clear that for him class exploitation does not exist in societies where access to means of production is mediated by the community. It is enforced by the imposition of physical coercion marked by the feudal mode of power with its "relationship of domination" (*Subaltern Studies-II* p. 317). The whole discussion of modes of power in feudalism is marked by this contrast of communal resistance/feudal domination. Therefore, it is surprising that he criticises the reviewers as "they harbour a quite unfounded prejudice that 'community' must necessarily imply some sort of egalitarianism and absence of exploitation" (*Social Scientist* No 141, p. 58). This "unfounded prejudice" is based on as close a reading of the text as was possible. How does Partha Chatterjee define the community? On the one hand he says it is marked by absence of exploitation since exploitation can be explained in terms of "the categorical opposites *community/external domination*". On the other hand he says that it is "unfounded" to harbour the "prejudice" that community implies absence of exploitation.

Concern is expressed over the fact that in the review while the crucial contrast between the pre-capitalist societies and capitalism—in that in pre-capitalist society there is a natural unity between the labourer and his means of production—has been noted, it has not been posed theoretically. But the thrust of the argument advanced in the review was precisely in the opposite direction. That this contrast was developed by Marx in order to conceptualise clearly the organisation of production specific to capitalism—the separation of the labourers from the means of production. The whole development of this concept therefore was illustrative and teleological in that it provided a contrast to the capitalist mode of production. It is not a coincidence surely that these discussions of pre-capitalist social organisation are found in *The Grundrisse*—the rough drafts written by Marx for self-clarification. While these texts are very original and stimulating, the extension of Marxist analysis to precapitalist modes of production does not owe much to these texts, and has been rather based on the general methodological concepts developed by Marx with regard to the analysis of the capitalist mode of production.

In this context, it was pointed out in the earlier review that anthropological studies which have analysed pre-capitalist societies using the concept of modes of production were *totally* ignored by Partha Chatterjee. Now we are told that though these Marxist anthropologists “have made a number of observations” with regard to the community, these are “specific, ad hoc and limited” (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 59), they had been left out “primarily for reasons of space” (ibid, p 58). Even a discussion of Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* was left out for “reasons of space” (*Subaltern Studies-II*, p 318). On the other hand the functionalist anthropologists did not face this problem of space and were summarised in over twelve pages (*Subaltern Studies-II*, p 315-330). This is especially strange because Partha Chatterjee now seems to be violently opposed to this school—“I find it incomprehensible that this body of theory should seem consistent with my very clearly stated position ” (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 58).

As far as the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production and the configuration of property specific to it is concerned, it should be pointed out that in Mughal India also there are records of sale of Zamindaris or land right. These are similar to the sale of land in Medieval Europe where the sale did not mean absolute ownership in the capitalist sense but only the right to extract rents. The development of capitalist legal property went apace with the development of capitalist relations of production as can be seen clearly in the conjunction of the enclosure acts with the expropriation of the peasants and the primitive accumulation of capital in England. The crucial fact was that the development of capitalist legal property went hand in hand with the development of capitalism. Its absence in the non-European societies should not be taken to mean that the transition to capitalism in the non-European countries was not possible.

Partha Chatterjee’s positivism can be seen clearly in his assertion that “in spite of their considerable critical efforts” the reviewers have failed to pinpoint the main weakness of the concept of the communal mode of power—“that it remains an abstract concept ” (*Social Scientist* No 141, p 60). Now it is in the empiricist epistemology that abstraction is considered a weakness. If we accept that a mode of power is a regional instance of the wider concept of the mode of production it necessarily has to be an abstract concept. A mode of production does not correspond to any empirically given society—but is a theoretical construct which has to be abstracted from the empirically given social structure. The twin articulation of the labourers, means of production and non-labourers along the axes of means and relations of production for instance is a theoretical construct. So are the various levels or instances of a mode of production—economic, political, ideological—in terms of which the mode of power has been defined. The invariant elements of a mode of production can be combined theoretically in order to generate modes of production which may not have existed historically.

To sum up, while Partha Chatterjee considers the concepts of modes of production and modes of power to be compatible, the precise relation of

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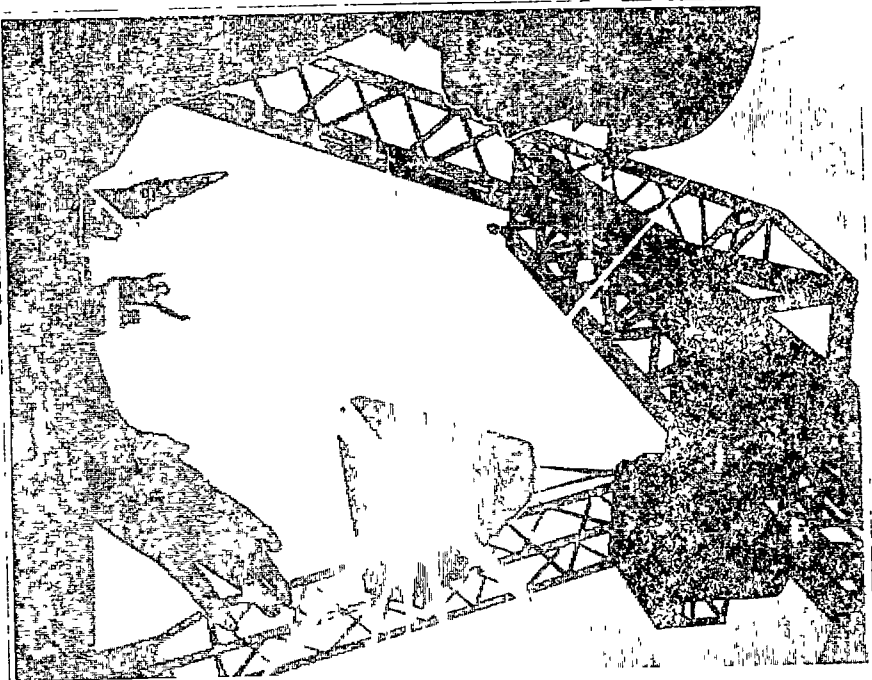
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*** MEDIEVAL INDIAN NOTIONS OF SECULAR STATECRAFT
● AID AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE THIRD WORLD ● A NOTE
ON LABOUR MOVEMENT IN BENGAL ● RISE AND GROWTH OF
LEFT MOVEMENT IN ANDHRA ● ACADEMIC MARXISM TODAY**

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the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences*

EDITORIAL NOTE

INCULCATING a particular perception of history is often the first and the most insidious step towards enforcing ideological conformism in contemporary bourgeois societies. Thus, school children in conservative Britain are taught to regard 1688 as the "Glorious Revolution", and are taught to sympathise, through comics, and story books, not to mention text books on history, with the "dashing young cavaliers", as opposed to the "boorish and cruel Roundheads". And where the revolutionary tradition is not actually distorted, it is altogether suppressed. It is important for Marxist historiography, therefore, not only to fight against ideological distortions of history, but also to undertake the task of recovering the revolutionary tradition of struggle which is systematically submerged in conservative historiography. *Social Scientist* accordingly has always kept its pages open for the publication of research work in history, that, however obliquely, aids in the furtherance of this project.

The current number of *Social Scientist* too is devoted largely to themes in the realm of historical research. Communal historiography in our country, which looks at Indian history in terms of the ascendancy of particular religious communities, usually portrays the medieval Indian state as if it constituted an Islamic theocracy committed entirely to the propagation of Islam and the establishment of *Shariat*. Iqtadar Alam Khan's article attacks this view and brings out the "secular" features of the medieval Indian state, not of course in the sense of entailing a separation of religion from politics, but in the sense of the state often playing the role of an arbiter between different religious groups, a phenomenon which anticipates, to an extent, the specific contours of modern Indian "secularism", the ideological buttress for this "secularism" was provided by the development of a concept of sovereignty which enjoined upon the king the task of establishing "universal reconciliation" within his realm. Such a theory and practice of statecraft, according to the author, was necessitated by the culturally fragmented nature of the ruling class, which incorporated both Muslim nobles as well as Hindu chieftains. Clashes within the ruling class, especially between the Hindu chiefs and the Muslim kings, which erupted with particular intensity in periods of contracting revenues, were often seen by contemporary, theologically-oriented

chroniclers, as constituting episodes in a holy war, but to see medieval Indian history through their eyes is to miss its essential characteristics and dynamics

The pieces by Sanat Bose and A. Satyanarayana recapture the history of struggle of the toiling masses in two different regions of the country at two different times. Bose draws attention to a significant though little-known document, *Report of the Committee on Industrial Unrest in Bengal, 1921* which gives valuable information on the wave of strike-struggles that swept over Bengal in 1920-21 in the aftermath of the first World War. Within a short span of nine months, 137 strikes broke out in Bengal, covering virtually all the existing industries in the province, the working class, for the first time in this region, was coming into its own. A fascinating glimpse into the nature, causes, and the course of development of these strikes is provided in this document, which deserves wider notice among scholars in this area. Satyanarayana focusses on the growth of the left movement, especially the communist movement, in Andhra in the thirties. Within a very short span of time, the communists who were a negligible force in 1934, could claim substantial influence among the working class, the peasantry and the youth, by virtue of their tireless work, within a united front strategy, in organising and leading the struggles of the toilers against the background of the vicissitudes that world capitalism was passing through.

Finally, the short piece by Princy Dharmaratne exposes the utter absurdity, from the point of view of third world economies, of the set of economic policies prescribed by agencies like the IMF. At a time when the world capitalist crisis has saddled these economies with acute balance of payments difficulties, when the need is for a restriction on their imports or a greater acceptance of their exports, the IMF pushes them into larger borrowing, which only further compounds their payments difficulties. As the loan terms stiffen, the loans pile up even faster, the net result is a snuffing out of whatever development had been taking place, and an escalation of the burdens on the people who are pressed deeper into the mire of hunger, poverty and unemployment.

IQTIDAR ALAM KHAN*

*Medieval Indian Notions of
Secular Statecraft in Retrospect*

THE LIBERAL ideas that permeate the Indian Constitution as also those exercising a large measure of influence on the general working of the modern Indian polity, in reality do not seek to establish a truly secular state, namely, a state that should preclude religion altogether from playing a role in the exercise of political authority. The emphasis is not on the separation of state from religion but on its role as an arbiter between religions. But, at the same time, the state is also perceived as an instrument for introducing reforms in the Hindu social and religious customs. It is expected to play a similar but less conspicuous role in respect of the Islamic institutions.¹ One may thus characterise the modern Indian state as a supra-religious organisation vested with the authority to establish, control and regulate the religious establishments. While not identifying itself with one particular religion, this state does aspire to bring the major religions of the country, and through them the socio-cultural outlook of the people following them, in harmony with social norms facilitating the ongoing processes of modernisation and capitalist expansion. From this it follows that the concept of secularism embedded in the governing principles of the Indian Constitution is peculiar to the Indian situation where a bourgeois landlord combine is called upon to control and carry forward an under-developed and culturally fragmented society on the path of capitalist development.

As to what are the historical antecedents of this particular type of secularism is a much debated question which has been sought to be answered by the social scientists variously in keeping with their respective perceptions of the forces and the influences that contributed to the shaping of modern Indian polity. It is no doubt true that many of the features of Indian secularism were actually defined, in the course of the freedom struggle.² These were largely the outcome of compromises and adjustments arrived at between different cultural and interest groups within the eclectic framework of Gandhian political theory. A further suggestion that the attitude of religious tolerance underlining Indian secularism may be traced back to ancient religious tradition of India also deserves consideration.³ But it seems that another and, perhaps, more pertinent angle from which an answer to this question may be sought is that of tracing the elements of continuity in the features of the Indian state from before the colonial period. An

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enquiry on these lines may be helpful in ascertaining as to what extent the secular features of the modern Indian state are rooted in the historical experience of the pre-modern period. As has been argued by the present author in an earlier paper, a closer examination of the working of the medieval Indian states brings out that Indian secularism, with all its special features, seems to be an extension of a particular tradition of political organisation, that was evolving in India down to the end of the 18th century. In this paper, I am going to elaborate on the same argument with reference to evidence that has been further enlarged in the meanwhile.

In this context it would be relevant to restate in general terms certain elementary propositions regarding the medieval Indian states dominated by different ethnic groups professing Islam. These states were invariably established and maintained on the basis of a working arrangement arrived at, after the initial acts of wars and conquests, between the two clearly identifiable ruling groups: the predominantly Muslim officers of the king and the hereditary local chiefs who were mainly Hindus. Both these groups flourished on the appropriation of available social surplus and also participated, though from different hierarchical planes, in the exercise of political authority. It would, therefore, be reasonable to treat the king's officers and the hereditary chiefs as two segments of one and the same ruling class. It was the primary interest of this larger ruling class that the medieval Indian states were oriented to serve. In these states, the lion's share of the appropriated surplus was of course cornered by the king and his high officers which made it inevitable that the hereditary chiefs should often feel disgruntled and sometimes even come into a clash with the king and his officers over the sharing of the revenues. The Persian chroniclers, whose perception of the contemporary political process was in most cases coloured by their theological education, falsely characterised these clashes as a part of the holy war that, according to their understanding, a Muslim ruler was expected to conduct continuously. Intra ruling class clashes of this type naturally tended to become fierce and prolonged in a situation of contracting revenues. While, on the other hand, in a state having at its disposal fast extending resources, the tensions within the ruling class tended to recede and the Hindu chiefs showed greater eagerness to identify themselves with the states dominated by the Muslim kings and their officers. Sometimes, periods of comparative harmony within the ruling class were accompanied by corresponding shifts in the principles governing the working of the state towards greater tolerance and accommodation of the non-Muslim groups.

A state representing the above situation of the ruling class would not have survived for long if it were organised as a Islamic theocracy committed entirely to establishing *shariat* and propagation of Islam. That the Delhi Sultanate as well as the Mughal empire were far from being Islamic theocracies, and actually carried within their state organisations many overtly secular features is fully borne out by the observations of Ziya-ud-din Barani and Abul Fazl on the problems of sovereignty. It also seems that some of the essential elements of the theories of state as enunciated by them were, apparently,

borrowed from the political theorists of Ancient India in preference to what has been postulated by the early Islamic authorities. This is again an indication of the extent and nature of the transformation that was taking place imperceptibly in the essential character of the medieval Indian states, bringing them in tune with the realities of the situation of a composite ruling class. In the ensuing paragraphs, we begin our investigation of the secular features of these states by exploring the writing of Baranī and Abul Fazl for establishing the above two points.

The *Fatawa-i Jahandari* of Baranī enables one to understand the real character of the Delhi Sultanate. "It was", writes Muhammad Habib, "not a theocratic state in any sense of the word. Its basis was not *shariat* of Islam but the *zawabit* or State laws made by the king." Baranī defines *zabita* as "a rule of action which a king imposes as an obligatory duty on himself for realising the welfare of the state and from which he never deviates." It is obvious that these *zawabit* would often tend to favour the royalty and the officers of the king. Baranī also expresses a pious wish that the *zawabit* framed by the *sultan* should not be violative of the provisions of *shariat*. But at the same time he makes it very explicit that the *zawabit* were not based on any religious text or texts or their interpretation by the 'Ulama. These were legislated by the king solely on the basis of his understanding of what was good for his kingdom. As Muhammad Habib puts it, 'Baranī leaves us in no doubt that in case of a conflict the state laws (i.e., *zawabit*) overrode the *shariat*.' In practice many of the *zawabit* framed by Muslim rulers in India tended to dilute the impact of Islamic *shariat* on the state. The *zabita* prohibiting cow slaughter framed by Zainul Abidin of Kashmir during the 15th century¹ and enforced all over the Mughal empire not only during the reign of Akbar but in those of Jahangir and Shahjahan as well² can be cited as an interesting example of this type of *zawabit*. It is worth noting that in the Mughal empire, prohibition of cow slaughter as well as killing of other animals considered sacred was not meant simply as a gesture of good-will towards the Hindu subjects but these *zawabit* also carried stringent punitive provisions. There are cases on record of Muslims accused of cow slaughter or of having killed a peacock being taken to task by the state authorities, which clearly amounted to going against the spirit of *shariat*.³

Defining the functions of the state, Baranī postulates, "One of the chief factors of stability in the affairs of the government is that every one confines himself to his own proper work as owing to this the administrative arrangements of the country improve."

According to him, "when persons belonging to one profession take to another from profit motive, the affairs of the (state) do not remain stable." At one place in the *Fatawa-i Jahandari*, he suggests three fold division of the society in keeping with the professions of the people, namely those of intellectuals, warriors and artisans. At another place, he mentions six professional categories, soldiers, agriculturists, speculators, shopkeepers, merchants and officers of the king. While referring to these categories he repeatedly stresses that these need to be separated from each other for the

good of the society¹⁰ Barani's above categorisation of the professional groups to be kept separated from each other is in addition to his two broader divisions of men on the basis of their births, *afazil* and *arazil*. This last division of men on the basis of birth and ancestry is not something novel to the Islamic tradition of post-koranic period. It has in fact come to be accepted as the central point of reference in the writings of the Muslim theorists who have generalised with reference to working of the post Abbasid state dominated by the Turkish elements.¹¹ But the notion of the society being divided into three or more professional groups and the state being responsible for maintaining a balance between them by not allowing inter-professional mobility is a point on which Barani's theory of state deviates from the postulates of the early Muslim theorists. In this respect he appears to be repeating the well known prescription of the ancient Indian writers like Kautilya and Narada that it was the duty of the ruler to prevent individuals from transgressing the rules of the *varna* or *jati* to which they belonged.¹²

A closer examination of Abul Fazl's observations on the problem of sovereignty indicates, that the process of secularisation of the Indian state, continuing since the inception of the Delhi Sultanate, had become still more pronounced during the 16th century. He gives a new definition of sovereignty which precludes entirely the identification of the state with one particular religion. Royalty is defined by Abul Fazl under *am-i manzil abadi* (loosely translated by Blochmann as "The House-hold") as "a light emanating from God, the *farr-i izidi*, which is communicated by God to the kings without the qualities flowing from the possession of *farr-i izidi* was that the king would always be above "sectarian differences". His beneficence and protection would be equally extended to all his subjects without making distinction on the basis of religion or any other denomination.¹³ Within the scope for the operation of those provisions which seek to impose certain specific types of disabilities on the *zimmis*. Nor does this allow the state to become the instrument for the propagation of one particular religion. But, on the other hand the theory of sovereignty recorded by Abul Fazl makes it obligatory for the king to establish universal reconciliation (*sulh-i kul*) within his realm. While listing the causes of "misunderstandings" and "contentions" discernible in Indian society in an illuminating passage in the third volume of the *Am-i Akbari*, under the title *ahwal-i Hindustan*, Abul Fazl hints that it was mainly owing to the apathy of the princes that the negative factors like religious persecution, an attitude of blindly following the established laws (*wazaridan-i tund bad-i taqlid wa afsurdan-i chiragh-i khrad*) and inability of the people to understand each other's paths/religions on account of linguistic barriers (*begang-i zubanha w nadanustan-i basich-ha-i yek digar*), which contribute to social strife, could not be remedied.¹⁴ From this passage it follows unmistakably that according to Abul Fazl, a king interested in establishing *sulh-i kul* in Hindustan was called upon, first and foremost, to remove the causes of social strife listed by him. And in this context an important task that he assigned to the king was that of enabling the people to appreciate the true spirit of different religions by making it possible for the elite to read and understand all the different religious texts in a language with which they were familiar

While reading this passage, one is reminded of Akbar's attempt to have all the major Brahmanical texts translated into Persian. That translation programme was apparently taken up as a step in the direction of this idyllic remedy for removing religious hatred.

It is worth noting that the theory depicting sovereignty as *farr-i-izadi* could be formally registered only towards the end of the sixteenth century when as a result of Akbar's Rajput policy, the composition of the body of the king's officers had already been altered in a significant manner. By this time, the Rajput chiefs had come to represent about 22.5 per cent of the high *man-sabdars* and their strength was continuously growing.¹⁵ It is obvious that the rise of this theory, with all its features, reflected through Abul Fazl's observations at different places in the *Ain-i Akbari*, was in some way linked with the above transformation in the composition of the high officers of the state. Apoparently, it revealed the changing cultural ethos of the ruling class within which the weight of the Rajput chiefs in terms of their share in the total appropriated surplus as well as in the exercise of political authority was growing steadily.

But let us also keep in mind the fact that the theory of *farr-i-izadi* was not Abul Fazl's original contribution. In reality, this new and patently un-Islamic conception of sovereignty was present in the Mughal polity even before Akbar's coming to the throne. Humayun is reported to have adopted elaborate rituals marking the ceremony of his appearance in public. This ceremony, according to Rafiuddin Ibrahim Shirazi, was known as *jalwa-i quds* ('the manifestation of divinity'). The attempt apparently was to provide the king with a divine halo. For establishing this practice he was in fact accused by men of orthodox persuasions of trying to assume a divine status.¹⁶ It was perhaps on account of a similar suspicion that in one of Shah Tahmasp's letters to Sultan Salim of Turkey, Humayun was criticised for allegedly abrogating *shariat*.¹⁷ This in turn should suggest that the new cultural ethos of the ruling class undermining the concept of *farr-i-izadi* had already started surfacing by the time Humayun came to the throne and it was perhaps an outcome of the entry of an appreciable number of Hindu chiefs in the service of the Delhi Sultanate during the preceding two centuries.

It is again with reference to the changing cultural ethos of the ruling class and the accompanying process of the growing importance of the Rajput chiefs within it that one can hope to adequately explain the contradictory phenomenon of the general working of the state in its several vital aspects, by and large conforming to the principles of *sulh-i kul* even during the periods when the reigning monarchs were pursuing manifestly intolerant religious policies. To support this contention one may cite instances like the continuation of a general ban on cow slaughter during the early years of Shahjahan's reign¹⁸ or the *jaziya* remaining in abeyance under Aurangzeb down to 1679 or the sudden influx of many more non-Muslims in the military service of the Mughal state during the second half of Aurangzeb's²⁰ reign when otherwise he is known to have adopted a very intolerant attitude towards the Hindus. That the basic principles of the theory of sovereignty,

recorded by Abul Fazl had come to stay in the Mughal polity is also proved by a number of Aurangzeb's statements that occur in his correspondence preserved in *Ahkam-i Alamgiri*. Notwithstanding his anxiety to restore the primacy of *shariat* in the affairs of the Mughal state, Aurangzeb writes to one of his officers "What have wordly affairs to do with religion? And why should bigotry intrude into matters of religion? 'For you there is your religion', and for me mine (*lakum dinkum wa ladin*)' If the laws were followed it would have been necessary to annihilate all the Rajputs." In another letter he declares, "what concern have we with the religion of anybody? Let Jesus follow his own religion and Moses his own"

Another significant feature of the theory of state recorded by Abul Fazl is represented by his justification for the existence of state power with reference to a social contract between the ruler and the ruled. Abul Fazl writes in *Am-i Akbari* under the title *nawa-i rozi* ("the maintenance of livelihood") "Since there is infinite diversity in the nature of men and distractions internal and external daily increase, and heavy-footed greed travels post haste, and light-headed rage breaks its reins, where friendship in this demon-haunted waste of dishonour is rare, and justice lost to view, there is in sooth, no remedy for such a world of confusion but in autocracy and this panacea in administration is attainable only in the majesty of just monarchs. If a house or a quarter cannot be administered without the sanctions of hope and fear of a sagacious ruler, how can the tumult of this world-nest of hornets be silenced save by the authority of a vice-regent of Almighty power. How in such a case can the property, lives, honour and religion of people be protected, notwithstanding that some recluses have imagined that this can be supernaturally accomplished, but a well-ordered administration has never been effected without the aid of sovereign monarch." He further proceeds to formulate that "The dues of sovereignty (*parany-i jahanbani*) have thus been set forth. The circulation of the means of sustenance, thus, is seen to rest on the justice of prudent monarchs and the integrity of conscientious dependent."²¹

Athar Ali aptly remarks that the words in which Abul Fazl describes *nawa-i rozi* recalls to one's mind Hobbes theory of social contract.²² But in this connection one might also suggest that the basic concept of a king performing a social function for which he earns the right to receive payment is perhaps borrowed from the theorists of ancient India. This idea is for example very clearly present in the postulates of Narada who explained the king's share of the agricultural produce as his fee (*vetan*) for the protection that he provides to the people. This notion, according to U N Ghoshal, appears more emphatically in the writings of the Buddhist authors. It is for instance borne out by a passage in Aryadeva's *Chatuhastaka* where in the course of an imaginary dialogue with a king, the author exclaims "How can you feel pride—you who are a mere slave of the multitude (*ganadasa*) fed (*bhrita*) by one sixth share (of the crops paid by the subjects)."²³ Even a cursory examination of this ancient Indian concept of land-revenue being the king's remuneration (*vetan*) makes one see its unmistakeable similarity with Abul Fazl's notion of "*parany-i-jahanbani*." Similarly, one might note that Abul

Fazl's division of the society into four professional groups, namely, (1) warriors, (2) artificers and merchants, (3) the learned, and (4) husbandmen and labourers and his prescription that it was "obligatory for the king to put each of these into proper places"¹¹ is strongly reminiscent of the rules framed by the ancient Indian theorists assigning the king a responsibility to enforce *varnadharma*.

At this point one might even be emboldened to say that the incorporation of many elements borrowed from ancient Indian tradition by Abul Fazl in his theory of sovereignty was not an isolated or accidental development. It in fact conformed to a general process of revival, within the medieval Indian polities dominated by the Muslim ruling groups, many precepts and notions relating to statecraft and sovereignty found in the folk-lore as well as the writings of learned theorists of ancient India. To cite a random example of such customs and notions surfacing in a predominantly Muslim state of medieval India, one might refer to a practice introduced during Islam Shah Sur's reign. According to Badauni, in each province, the high nobles were expected to pay weekly obeisance to the king's "shoes and quiver" given to them as symbols of the physical presence of the royalty.¹² The notion implied in this practice that an article of the personal use of a reigning king should be deemed as carrying prestige and authority associated with the royalty and that it could be treated as a symbol of his physical presence is totally alien to Islamic theory. It is on the other hand very reminiscent of similar notions discernible in the *Ramayana*. Another evidence of similar genre is Babur's comment on the situation inside the kingdom of Bengal then ruled by the Saaved dynasty. "A surprising custom in Bengal", states Babur, "is that hereditary succession is rare. The royal office is permanent—and it is the office that the Bengalis regard with respect—Bengalis say, 'we are faithful to the throne, we loyally obey whoever occupies it'".¹³ It is understandable that this notion of royalty being invested in a material object, a particular throne, should strike Babur as surprising. It, in fact, had no validity in the Islamic tradition outside India. But it is obvious from the above statement of Babur that this notion borrowed from Hindu folk-lore was gradually acquiring acceptance even in the states ruled by Muslim dynasties. Babur's reference to Bengalis being faithful to the throne rather than the person of the king reminds one of the anecdote prefacing the tales of *Singhasan Battisi* that whoever sat on a mound where Vikramaditya's throne was lying buried, acquired the royal attributes of sagacity and justice.¹⁴

It cannot, however, be denied that under the Delhi Sultanate as well as the Mughal empire, the orthodox *shariat* was adopted as a uniform civil code in most parts of the country. But in this context one must distinguish between the operation of *shariat* as the guiding principle of the state and its use as a useful set of laws that only with slight modification could be applied widely for systematising the procedure of dispensing justice in civil cases. Regarding the enforcement of *shariat* in the medieval Indian states, one actually discerns a two facet development. On the one hand, the general tendency was towards ignoring or modifying its provisions discouraging the active association of

Hindu chiefs with the exercise of political authority. At the same time, *shariat* came to be tacitly accepted as a useful civil code by all the sections of the ruling class, including large segments of the Hindu chiefs. The *shariat* was generally recognised as a workable legal basis for keeping together a centralised state. It is of interest to note, in this context, that under some of the non-Muslim successor states of the Mughal empire, *shariat* continued to be used as the standard legal code. For example we know that in the principality established by Ranjit Singh in the Punjab, there existed qazi's courts and these courts adjudicated in cases involving Muslims as well as non-Muslims.²⁸ This may suggest that even some of the ostensibly 'theocratic' features of the medieval Indian states were not so out of tune with the Indian tradition as is some times imagined. In this connection a remark of Shah Nawaz Khan that for *qazis* "the registers of *deshpandyas* and words of the *zamindars* are the guide" is worth remembering.²⁹ It amply indicates the functional orientation of the *shariat* under the Mughals which made it acceptable to the non-Muslim chiefs.

Donald Eugene Smith has credited the British with introducing the "revolutionary principle" that "it was within the province of the state to regulate and change the society by legislation". This principle, he correctly points out, was established as a consequence of a tendency on the part of Hinduism to look to the state for the management of its affairs. But he is certainly not on a very firm ground when he makes the categorical statement that "the right to legislate in matters of social and religious customs was first asserted only in the British period". Equally untenable is Smith's assumption that the pre-British rulers had no "legislative powers".³⁰ As a matter of fact, evidence relating to the framing of *zawabit* by the medieval Indian rulers for reforming the social and religious customs of Hindus as well as Muslims is almost unending. There also exists considerable evidence suggesting the occasional participation of the medieval Indian states in establishing and maintaining the religious establishments of not only the Muslims but those of non-Muslims as well. Sometimes, the Muslim rulers also acted as adjudicators in settling disputes involving different Hindu castes or sects in accordance with the customary law.

The intervention of the Muslim state in the regulation of the practice of *sati* came at a very early stage. On the authority of Ibn Batuta it is known that during the Tughlaq period the relatives of a woman planning to perform *sati* were bound by law to inform the local *shiqdar* who would send one of his agents to be present on the scene to prevent coercion.³¹ It seems this kind of law continued to exist throughout the Sultanate period but it cannot be said with any degree of certainty as to what extent it was actually enforced in different parts of the empire. In placing a ban on the burning of young widows whose marriage had not been consummated,³² Akbar only further extended the operation of a *zabitah* already in existence at least since the Tughlaq period. Such a law continued to operate until the fall of the Mughal empire. Even during Aurangzeb's reign one comes across instances of the administration's intervention in the cases of alleged coercion of widows to perform

sati ⁴¹ This aspect of the Muslim state's 'interference' with Hindu religion was basically different from the attitude reflected in the measures like imposition of *j'ziyah* or ban on idol worship. The law against *sati* was reformist in character and was not motivated by a desire to humiliate Hindus or win converts for Islam. It would further appear that this intervention of the state had a considerable impact at least in the Doab region, where the administration was more effective ⁴¹

The reforming zeal of the Muslim state with regard to the Indian Islam was still greater but in this respect the general tendency was to suppress practices alien to the orthodox interpretation of Quran and *sunna*. The attitude of veneration towards tombs, participation of women in religious functions like *urs* etc., and a host of cults, rituals and social customs have remained throughout a distinctive feature of popular Islam in India. These were always frowned upon by the Muslim orthodoxy. Operating through the state, the *ulama* always strove to remove such *bid'ats*. The measures enumerated by Firuz Tughluq in his memoirs⁴² and the imposition of a ban on music and recreational activities by Aurangzeb⁴³ fall under the same category. Occasionally, certain *zawabit*, negating the principles of *shariat* were also enforced. A number of *zawabit* introduced by Akbar such as discouraging child marriages and those between cousins and near relations⁴⁴ or prohibiting circumcision of young children, were aimed at introducing reforms in the Muslim social practices which often clashed with the provisions of *shariat*. Akbar actually came very close to prohibiting polygamy. He was prepared to make an exception only when the wife failed to give birth to an heir⁴⁵. The ban on cow slaughter and rules prohibiting the slaughter of any kind of animals on certain days during the week were yet other *zawabit* of the same nature which continued to operate for a considerable time even after Akbar⁴⁶.

The earliest piece of evidence regarding the participation of the Muslim state in the establishment of Hindu religious institutions dates back to the Tughluq period. There exists an inscription dated in the Vikrama year 1385 (A.D. 1328) found at Batiagarh (Madhya Pradesh) which announces the construction of a *gow-math* on Muhammad bin Tughluq's order. The building, according to the inscription, was completed by Khwaja Jalaluddin who appointed his servant, Dhanau as a manager of the institution⁴⁷. Again according to a contemporary Jain treatise, Muhammad bin Tughluq visited Satrunjaya temples and performed "some acts of devotion appropriate to a leader of Jain Sangha"⁴⁸. This evidence points to a similar situation to the one that existed during the early phase of the East India Company's government. Apparently, the political authority found it difficult to keep away from "the impure and degrading services of the pagodas",⁴⁹ an indication that the ancient conventions regulating the relationship between the state and Hindu religious institutions continued to carry considerable force under the Muslim dynasties as well.

Such an impression is further reinforced by the evidence from the Mughal period. After his break with the orthodoxy in 1579, Akbar went out

of his way in projecting his image as the sole arbiter between various creeds and religions professed by his subjects.¹ Regarding Hinduism, Akbar had assumed certain functions unprecedented in the history of the Muslim State in India. According to traditions surviving among certain communities, he used to give verdicts determining the relative position of smaller groups within a caste. For instance, the Brahmans of Madhya Pradesh proudly recall the fact that Akbar had recognised them as the 'highest and purest' among all the Brahmans.¹¹ Akbar is also credited with building a temple in Kashmir "for the purpose of binding together the hearts of unitarians in Hindustan, and especially those of His worshippers that live in the province of Kashmir".¹² The Persian inscription that had been composed by Abul Fazl for this temple, in its form as well as content, reminds one of Ashoka's edicts. Another evidence suggesting Mughal authority's participation in the management of religious institutions dates back to 1566, a time when Akbar was still under the influence of the orthodox *ulama*. While returning from the Punjab in that year, he was approached by the heads of the rival groups of Jogis and Sanyasis who had a dispute as to who should occupy a certain spot near the principle shrine at Kurukshetra that was considered more convenient for alms collection. Although Akbar was convinced of the greater validity of the Sanyasis' claim, he desisted from giving a verdict as both the groups wanted him simply to act as a referee during a fight between them, which was, apparently an established way of settling such disputes. In the fight that ensued, the Sanyasis were out-numbered, but eventually they succeeded in putting the Jogis to flight with the help of the royal retainers disguised as mendicants.¹³ This feature of the Mughal state persisted till long after Akbar's death. In this respect Jahangir went a step further than Akbar. On one occasion, he even tried to act as a judge with regard to the aesthetic value of an image installed in a temple built by one of his Rajput officers and got it removed.¹⁴

Such features were by no means confined to the states dominated by Islam. These were to be noticed in a more pronounced form in Hindu states. With regard to Indian Islam, the Hindu rulers tended to adopt the same kind of supervisory role which they would have towards Hinduism. A conspicuous example indicating the above tendency was the communication of the Raja of Calicut to Shah Rukh Mirza seeking his permission to introduce his name in the Friday sermons in the mosques of Calicut.¹⁵ Under the same category would come the Maratha state's policy of providing funds for the maintenance of mosques and such other Muslim establishments situated within the *sawaraj* territory.¹⁶

While concluding this discussion, I should like to clarify that my comments on the "secular" features of the medieval Indian states are in no way meant to underplay the strong influence that had been exercised for considerable periods by an intolerant and aggressive interpretation of religion. Some times, the state was also used for the propagation of a particular religion. But such periods were few and not very long and it never happened that the trends pulling in the opposite direction were totally absent from the

so-called Muslim politics of medieval India

At the same time it would also appear that the medieval Indian state often tended to play the role of an arbiter between different religious groups. It also showed an inclination to promote reforms in the religious and social customs of diverse groups. Occasionally, the state in medieval India even participated in the establishment and maintenance of the religious institutions of not only the dominant groups but those of the less influential ones as well. It is in view of these features of the medieval Indian state that modern Indian secularism may be regarded, in certain respects, an extension of the notions of state-craft suiting the situation of a culturally fragmented ruling class that were apparently evolving in India down to the eighteenth century.

- 1 Cf. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanist*, Bombay 14 May 1950 (reproduced in *Secularism in India* edited by V. K. Sinha 1968 p. 154. Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 1963 pp. 216-34 and Setalvad, *Secularism*, Patel Memorial Lecture 1965 pp. 17-22.
- 2 The concept of a state capable of arbitrating between religions was propounded for the first time in its modern context in a resolution passed by the All-India Congress at its Karachi session (1931) wherein while affirming the ideas of religious liberty and adequate protection to the minorities, it was asserted that "the state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions." Radhakrishnan later developed the same idea specifically pointing out that it should not be confused 'with secularism or atheism'. Compare Setalvad, *Secularism* pp. 17-22.
- 3 For a summary of Radhakrishnan's argument that the philosophy of Vedanta promoted religious tolerance see Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State* p. 117.
- 4 Iqbalur Alam Khan, 'The Secular State in India: Historical Perspective' in *Essays in Honour of Prof. S. C. Sarkar* PPH 1976 p. 166.
- 5 Muhammad Habib, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, Introduction, p. VI.
- 6 For the prohibition of cow slaughter by Zamil Abidin see Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. II Nawal Kishore p. 185.
- 7 Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhabul Tawarikh*, Vol. II Calcutta 1965 p. 261.
- 8 From a perusal of *Tazkira-i Pir Hasu Teli* (M. S. Department of History, AMU ff. 30b-37) as compiled by Surat Singh a petty official of the Mughal state during 1644-47, one forms an impression that cow slaughter was prohibited in the Punjab down to the middle of Shahjahan's reign.
- 9 Cf. Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhabul Tawarikh*, Vol. III p. 118 and *Travels of Fray Sabastein Manrique, 1629-1643* in C. Eckford Luard Vol. II Oxford, 1827 p. 113.
- 10 Muhammad Habib and Afzar Ullah, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 38-97.
- 11 Nizamul Mulk Tusi, *Siyasatnama*, Tehran 1348 A.H. p. 216.
- 12 Kautilya's *Arthashastra* by R. Shamasastry Mysore 1967 p. 7 and U. N. Ghoshal in *The Classical Age*, ed. R. C. Majumdar 1970 p. 345.
- 13 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. I translated by H. Blochmann pp. 3-4.

- 14 *Ain-i Akbari* Vol III, Nawal Kishore, pp 3-4
- 15 Cf Athar Ali *Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, 1966, p 31
- 16 Rafiuddin Ibrahim Shirazi, *Tazkirat ul-Muluk*, MS British Library Add 23 883, Chapter IX
- 17 Cf Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* Oxford 1964, p 25
- 18 Cf Surat Singh, *Tazkira-i Pir Hassu Teli*, ff 30 b 37 a
- 19 S K Sharma *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, 1st edition p 153 Compare Saush Chandra, 'Jizyah and the State in India during 17th Century' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XII pp 32-40 where he quotes a statement from *Ahulasatus Sivag*, suggesting that although the revival of *jizyah* engaged Aurangzeb's attention at the commencement of his reign, he "postponed the matter due to certain political contingencies"
- 20 According to Athar Ali, while during 1658-78, the non-Muslim nobles constituted 21.6 per cent of the total number of the nobles, during the last ten years of Aurangzeb's reign their strength rose to 31.6 per cent *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, p 31
- 21 *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol I, Nawal Kishore, pp 201-205 compare Jarrett's translation, Vol II pp 54-55, 58-59
- 22 Athar Ali 'Theories of Sovereignty in Islamic Thought in India' published in the proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1982
- 23 Compare U N Ghoshal, in *The Classical Age*, ed by R C Majumdar pp 345-46
- 24 Blochmann *Ain-i Akbari*, tr, p 4
- 25 *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, Vol I p 385
- 26 *Baburnama*, tr by A S Beveridge reprint London, 1969 pp 382-83
- 27 Compare, Franklin Egerton, *Vikrama's Adventures*, Vols 2, Harvard Oriental Series 1926
- 28 See Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, 1970 p 317 wherein it is mentioned that Ranjit Singh appointed General Avitabile as *qazi* and governor of Lahore
- 29 *Maasir-ul Umara*, Vol I Calcutta, p 239
- 30 *India as a Secular State*, pp 216-31, 304
- 31 Ibn Baruta, quoted by A B M Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p 326 Compare Gibb's translation wherein it is not mentioned that the agent of the *shiqdar* would be present at the time of the burning of a widow *Travels in Asia and Africa*, ed Denison Ross and Fillen Power, London, 1969 pp 191-92
- 32 Badauni *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, Vol II, p 306
- 33 Several cases are recorded in *Waga-i Sarkar Ranthanbor Was Ajmer*, MS Preserved in Rampur
- 34 By the time British authority was established in India, the incidence of *sati* in the Gangetic plain had become negligible, while it was widely practised in Bengal and Rajputana, Donald Eugene Smith *India as a Secular State*, p 217
- 35 *Futuh-at-i Firuz Shahi*, ed Shaikh Abdur Rashid, 1964, pp 8-9
- 36 Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ut Tuhaf*, Vol II, pp 213-14
- 37 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol I, tr by Blochmann, pp 287-88
- 38 *Ain-in Akbari* Vol III Nawal Kishore, p 190, and tr, by Jarrett, ed, by J N Sarkar, 1948, p 449
- 39 *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, Vol II, pp 201, 303, 321-22 Compare *Tazkira-i Pir Hassu Teli*, wherein it is clearly suggested that the ban on cow slaughter continued under Jahangir as well
- 40 Hira Lal, *Descriptive Lists of Inscriptions in Central Provinces and Berar*, Nagpur, 1916, p 50,

quoted by Mehdi Hasan, *Tughluq Dynasty*, 1963, pp 334-35

- 41 M B Jhavery, *Comparative and Critical Study of Mantrastra*, p 28 quoted by Mahdi Hasan, *Tughluq Dynasty*, p 321
- 42 Cf Romash Chandra Banerjee, 'The State Patronage to Hindu and Muslim Religions' *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol III January-June 1939, p 26 wherein are reproduced extracts from a memorandum submitted to the government by nearly two hundred civil, and military officers, including the clergy, of the company's government in Madras, referred to in *The Court of Directors Despatch*, dated October 1837
- 43 In Abul Fazl's summary of the *mahzar*, a deliberate attempt is made to create an impression that Akbar had been empowered to arbitrate not only between the orthodox schools of Muslim jurisprudence but also between different religions and sects. Compare *Akbarnama*, Vol III, pp 269-70. For the original text of the *mahzar* Cf Badauni *Muntakhabat Tawarikh*, Vol II, p 271.
- 44 Dev Raj Chandra, 'The Sanskritist and Indian Society', *Enquiry*, New Series Vol II, No 2 1965, p 54
- 45 Muhammad Askan Hussain *Durrul Manshur*, quoted by Blochmann, *Ain-in Akbari*, Vol I tr, pp LIV-LV
- 46 Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, Vol II, p 287, Badauni, *Muntakhabat Tawarikh*, Vol II, p 93
- 47 *Tuzuk-i Jahangir*, ed by Sauid Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur and Aligarh, 1863-64 p 124
- 48 Kamal al-din Abdul Razzaq, (British Library, Or 1291, f 204 b) cited by Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, p 20
- 49 There exist a large number of such grants. To quote at random, one may refer to a *sanad* dated A D 1746-47 giving a grant of one and a half *bigha* of 'land for the expenses on account of *Chiraghbatti* and other services' of a newly built mosque in the village Mahagiri Pakhadi in *gasba* Thana, Cf *The Peshwa's Diaries*, Vol II, document number 171, p 101 (For this reference I am indebted to Dr Mahendra Pal Singh)

Aid and the Development of the Third World

DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGY is seen as a response to economic needs and crises in the period of time in which it evolves. Western industrial development working with a *laissez faire* economic outlook, which had already been generated with the demise of feudalism and the release of the sociological base needed for the advent of 'economic man', proceeded as a self-generating force. Development gathered momentum, fanned by technological innovations of the Industrial Revolution and accelerated by the back-up of financial institutions and simultaneous developments in transport, further strengthened by the opening up of overseas colonial territories to serve the needs of development.

The socialist strategy typified by the Soviet Union's response to development after 1917 was a markedly self-generated response worked out under a tightly planned economic framework of a centralised capital-intensive industrial base, which provided it with the ground work for the economic "take-off" after the Russian revolution.

Development aid to the Third World, in contrast to development ideologies of the past, has grown as a hand-out from the Western world to the developing world and does not generate a self-propelled development process. Hence, an analysis of the historical evolution of the idea of development aid, the motives behind such hand-outs bearing in mind the world economic climate within which aid continues to be granted, and illustrative experiences of typical recipients of aid would be instructive in an assessment of the Third World in the contrasting responses to development worked out after decolonisation.

The twin institutions—the IMF and the World Bank—the prime aid-givers of today were conceived in an era when more than two-thirds of the Third World were non-existent and were therefore not framed with Third World objectives in mind. It was only Latin America that then constituted what is now known as the Third World. The world had gone off the Gold Standard in 1939. Britain had lost her primacy in world trade and investment, and was being replaced by the US as the foremost international power. The Great Depression of 1930 had strained the international monetary mechanism. Nation-states in Europe were adjusting to the new economic policies of Welfare Economics with their emphasis on minimum

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wage legislation, and full employment. The swing away from the automatic adjustment process of the Gold Standard meant that European states were breaking up into isolated economic entities managing their own economies, with exchange controls, import quotas and import substitution. Such an international system would give a blow to the U.S. whose trade and investment potential after the end of the Second World War was at its peak.

The world system established under U.S. hegemony after the Second World War was not free-tradist as that under British hegemony in the nineteenth century.

Trade liberalisation was through bilateral and multilateral negotiations rather than through unilateral means. The main objective of U.S. imperial domination was a guarantee of an "open door" not primarily to trade but to free enterprise, particularly against threats of nationalisation and protection. Hence the need to devise a system which would harness to its maximum U.S. investment interests, safeguarding trade interests as well, and pursuing U.S. hegemonic influence in the post-War international scene, whilst at the same time reconciling individual economic interests of the nation-states of Europe. The Bretton Woods institutional structure was the answer—the IMF and the World Bank being fashioned for the purpose of identifying the tools for a world economy open to U.S. investment and trade. As Eugene Black, a former President of the World Bank, stated in drumming up support for aid in the fifties, "Our Foreign Aid Programme constitutes a distinct benefit to American business."

The safeguard worked into the IMF conditions for the purpose of creating guarantees for foreign investment as the primary objective was that the Fund frowned upon any distortions to free market forces such as government interventionist policies, protectionism, rationing and subsidies. For safeguarding U.S. trade interests, the Fund's ideology maintained that liberalised imports must be encouraged, and also discouraged discriminatory trade and currency practices such as multiple exchange rates which were seen as barriers to trade expansion. The U.S. was to be the final arbiter of exchange rates by subjecting nations to exchange rate adjustment with U.S. approval. The Fund's pool of resources totalling 29 billion was to serve as an incentive in favour of multilateral trade practices and against national and bilateral solutions to payments problems.

For almost 12 years after the Second World War, the U.S. remained the sole disbursor of foreign aid. In moving from the status of a U.S. dominated world economy to a world system in which newcomers such as Germany and Japan were moving into core status, the U.S. found that it could still maintain the centre of gravity of an increasingly integrated world economy by forming a consortium of European aid-givers. The consortium was formed with the aim of 'sharing the burden' but, in effect, as business partners in a transnational expansion of capital overseas. As a memorandum from the Confederation of British Industry to the House of Commons put it in 1969, "for British Industry, help to the Third World is in a sense an investment in the development of markets and sources of supply of raw materials," (Teresa

Hayter, *Creation of World Poverty*) The illusion of multilateralism was useful, the dominant voting power for the U S and the informal influence she exerted over the Fund assured her a key role in its objectives. No money would be disbursed counter to the rules of the Fund which meant that the "Good Housekeeping Seal" of the IMF becomes a precondition for aid. This was a convenient mode of making the aid-givers accept the U S influence and the aid-receivers adhere to the dictates of the U S policy.

To assure success, the Fund maintained an "old boy network" in the key access points to economical and political power in the Third World. These men were Western educated and steeped in the Fund's liberal ideology managing the strategic arsenals of economic and political power in Third World central banks and finance ministries. In other instances, 'our men' staffed the planning agencies of the Third World. Professor Bell—a U S citizen—was on the staff of the Planning Board of Pakistan. World Bank and IMF representatives are on the staff of the Korean Development Institute. The Central Bank and economic ministries in Zaire are run by IMF and World Bank officials.

A look at the evaluation techniques of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank or bilateral agencies like the U K Overseas Development Authority will throw light on the directional flow of aid with the thinking that shapes the grant of aid. Whatever the Manuals of Operating Procedure might say on the objectives of aid, both agencies ultimately use the monetary criteria of the rate of return in assessing the impact of a project under aid. If the primary function of aid is to promote development in poor countries, then the legitimate criteria for assessment of projects for further disbursement of funds should have a strong bias towards its impact on target groups such as low income farmers. However, the World Bank's budget is financed by shareholders—national, corporate and individual. The Overseas Development Authority disbursements are responsible to the U K taxpayer. Both of these and other lending institutions have to assess impact by the monetary rate of return to show that aid works. The Overseas Development Authority lays less stress on the rate of return although evaluation is done before or during the life of the project with little assessment on impact, whilst in any case few projects are subjected to evaluation under the ODA scheme.

Nearly 10 years have elapsed since Robert McNamara asked the World Bank to switch its lending policy in the direction "of more aid to the poorest" to meet the basic needs of the very poor, and yet there are only a handful of projects where one can with certainty say on which income groups the import of aid was felt. In the World Bank Report for 1982, an attempt was made in the direction of the new policy by using the rate of return on small farmer projects, and numbers of small farmers reached. However, it is not known whether the criteria of reaching the poorest has been satisfied. There is also a larger Fund disbursement in the direction of agricultural, educational and health projects with the Fund's change in policy objectives. However, as long as aid agencies treat the rate of return as the major yardstick for evaluation of

projects and disbursement of funds, there cannot be a basic change in aid disbursement strategy

Third World debt ratios as well as other indices are a revealing indication of the path taken by aid vis-a-vis development. By 1981, 75 per cent of the loans taken by the Third World were used to meet debt service requirements, which meant that only 25 per cent was available for development, and that at high interest rates charged by international commercial banks. In other words, the Third World countries are now forced to borrow to pay off their past debts. In 1982, debts of 22 Third World countries were re-scheduled, and international bankers realised the serious repercussions of the vast magnitude of Third World debt and virtually ceased their operations, leaving the Third World countries faced with serious difficulties. By the end of 1983, total UDC debt aggregated 800 billion dollars. Of this Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela and the Philippines accounted for the bulk of the figure. Should Mexico and Brazil, with a debt of 100 billion dollars each, renounce their debt service obligations, nine major U.S. banks would be forced out of business.

Debt Indicators for Developing Countries, 1983

Ratio of Debt to GNP	26.7 per cent
Ratio of Debt to Exports	121.4 per cent
Debt Service Ratio	20.7 per cent
Total Debts Outstanding and Disbursed	595.8 billion dollars
Official	208.5 billion dollars
Private	387.3 billion dollars

From 'Economic Crisis, Third World and NITO' by Newton Gunasinghe and C. Abeyssekera based on a sample of 90 underdeveloped countries

Here the ratio of debt to exports is useful in showing the amount of exports the Third World would need to meet its total debts—it was 121.4 per cent of total exports in 1983.

If aid leads to development, then the corollary should be a plus in the balance sheets of the aid-receivers, but the actual experience reveals the contrary.

Brazil—the largest debtor in the developing world with a 100 billion dollar debt—has taken the IMF conditionalities seriously. But the IMF prescribed economic adjustment processes are leading to ever-increasing social pressures. The Fund's economic prescription—wage cuts, cuts in government expenditure affecting employment and welfare, cut-backs on the budget deficit, which reached 40 billion dollars in 1984—are affecting the poorer strata of Brazilian society, broadening the income disparity and compounding existing social tensions. Brazil has met the Fund's targets except for inflation, which now stands at 220 per cent. She now wants as good a deal as Mexico from the Fund. But at what social cost? Its record of income distribution is notoriously bad. According to British official sources, during the years 1960-77, the share of the poorest half of the population in Brazil's national income fell from 17 to 13 per cent, whilst that of the richest one per

cent rose from 12 to 18 per cent. In other words, one per cent of the rich received more than what the poorest half received. According to UNICEF statistics, 3 million Brazilian children live in absolute destitution. Brazil is requesting the World Bank for more aid to agriculture though this itself is not re-distributive. Labour unrest is taking its toll on industry. Unions are demanding pay increases. Thousands of dockers, bus, railway and airport workers resumed picketing after suspending strike action in May 1985, demanding pay increases. And yet, the country's armaments and aircraft industries are booming with record sales, making the rich richer and helping to aggravate military tensions around the globe.

"For us debt is poverty, stagnation and lack of investment," said President Alfonsín of Argentina. A country, which at the turn of the century equalled Canada and Australia in international economic status, Argentina is now far poorer than it ought to be, given its abundance of grain, cattle, minerals and last but not the least, the foreign aid she receives. It is today a poor nation saddled with mounting social tensions.

Threatened with the loss of future credits, Argentina's President was compelled to accept the IMF austerity package which he had dubbed at Cartagena in 1984 as "recessionary". According to an Opposition Peronist Deputy, "Today in the North, they have signed our Death Certificate for economic recovery." Alfonsín's agreement with the IMF imposes severe austerity measures on Argentina including cuts in public spending, higher taxes and a large currency devaluation. The touchiest part of the agreement has to do with wage cuts, though Alfonsín had repeatedly promised 6-8 per cent increase in wages in real terms. However, "Labour is threatening the nation with paralysis whilst the Foreign Banks are holding the economy hostage." Workers had suffered a 50 per cent loss of purchasing power during the military regime. Anyway a 700 per cent inflation erodes the benefits of any wage increase. The Confederation of Labour threatened a nation-wide "battle plan", which crippled industry. In June 1984, some two million workers in government and in almost every major economic sector launched strikes and slow-downs in protest against acceptance of IMF directives.

A UNICEF report revealed that 35 per cent of Argentinian children were malnourished. Inflation stood at 700 per cent. A serious attempt made by Latin American States under Argentina's leadership to persuade the North to take account of economic, social and political needs of the debtor nations, floundered in spite of the important role played by Latin American debtors in U.S. banking institutions. The U.S. was able to drive a wedge into this united action by favouring some nations with better terms.

The geopolitical stake the U.S. has in its backyard—Mexico—assured the latter most favoured treatment and she was held up as a model, which adjusted dramatically to IMF prescriptions. It was bad politics for the U.S. to isolate her southern neighbour. The U.S. needed cheap Mexican labour for her industries, while Mexico in turn needed American tourists. Moreover, Mexico had oil. For all these reasons she was able to adjust better to the debt crunch, even though her foreign debt stands at about 100 billion dollars.

With a political system which seems repressive in comparison with Brazil's or Argentina's, for Mexico the adjustment process was easier

Yet, Mexico's economic, social and political balance sheet is far from being satisfactory. Mexico faces an economic crisis that is the worst in the past half century with cuts in government spending induced by the spending spree of the seventies. The peso to dollar exchange rate has risen eight-fold in the past three years—from 27:1 to 220:1. The annual inflation rate of 60 per cent is of course low by Latin American standards.

Social tensions are on the rise. There have been five eruptions of tension between December and February 1985, the last one erupted on the issue of rigged mayoral elections.

Of the Third World debtors, South Korea's case with her 47 billion dollar debt is somewhat different. For two decades it has maintained an 8 per cent growth rate. From textiles and shoes, it is now on the high-tech trail of microprocessors and video recorders. Her success is largely due to her switch to high-tech industry. She is now the second largest producer of basic electronic components, running behind Japan only. Korea has struck partnerships with well known Western firms in search of know-how, equipment and funds. The per capita income has risen from 100 dollars in the sixties to 2000 dollars at present. Two-thirds of the Koreans consider themselves part of the middle classes. Korea's exports account for 30 per cent of the GNP.

Yet, even here all is not rosy. Korea's 50 largest *chaebols* swallowed more than half of her GNP. They are heavily over-borrowed, and 50 conglomerates have a debt equalling four and a half times their net worth. They swallow up a large part of Korea's wealth and have stymied the growth of small business. Prosperity has spread to the large cities and the industrial giants, but small businesses have yet not felt the impact of the new Eldorado. Unlike Japan, which has managed to spread her post-War wealth rather evenly, Korea is beset by a wide income gap between the rich and the poor. Deep pockets of poverty exist throughout the country.

Korean *chaebols* are inefficient. The economy is in need of investment funds. The U.S. and Europe are protecting their markets against Korean exports. Chun's move to liberalise the political system may well result in economic instability. Six per cent of Korea's GNP goes for military spending to keep the communist North at bay. The U.S. has the whip hand here as the withdrawal of its second largest force from the northern frontier can threaten the Korean miracle with instability. As a Western banker put it: "it is a house of cards."

What is clear from the foregoing analysis is that the solution recommended by the IMF and World Bank only aggravates the existing debt problem. First, the monetarist philosophy of the IMF and World Bank lays emphasis on relaxation of subsidies, wage controls, the free play of market forces for consumer essentials such as water, electricity and transport—all impinging on the poorer strata of society and warding off a trickling down effect of

development Prolonged austerity is bound to shatter the legitimacy of political structures

Secondly, as Henry Kissinger has admitted, "The debt crisis is a symptom of a cause of a structural crisis." The accumulation of past debt and the debt crisis itself reveal the inability of most of the Third World countries to drum up exports in the long run to solve the balance of payments problem, and is thus a refutation of the theory that liberalisation can serve as a cure for long term payments problems haunting these countries

In brief, the world recession is bringing about a falling off of demand for Third World exports. At the same time, the problem is further complicated by large price falls for the Third World products, the bulk of which constitutes raw materials. The result is a worsening of the terms of trade for the Third World countries. This takes the form of a structural crisis and must be tackled with an adjustment process that addresses itself to the key factors behind the crisis. A persisting deterioration in the balance of payments position of the Third World countries needs a means whereby an expansion of exports can be brought about whilst curtailing imports. Instead, the IMF forces these nations not to solve this problem where export earnings are inadequate, but to go in for foreign borrowing in the name of development, which only warrants more debt to pay a part of the existing debt. As most of the Third World countries are doing the same, and on an extended scale, they are being made to borrow on high interest rates, making them less and less capable of meeting their debt service commitments. Anytime now the debt bomb can explode.

The dilemma facing the world economy reduces itself to: who is going to bear the burdens of the crisis—the North or the South. For the North, the problem is one of avoiding a bank crash. For the South, it is a desire to avoid debt servicing and promote growth. The success of monetarism and the consequent expansion of credit in place of direct investment are an expression of the fact that the North is once again gaining at the expense of the South.

SANAT BOSE *

A Note on Labour Movement in Bengal (1920-21)

THE OBJECT of the present note is to acquaint readers with an important source material for the study of the labour movement in Bengal (1920-21) *Report of the Committee on Industrial Unrest in Bengal, 1921*, published by the Government of Bengal in 1921. Few scholars working on the history of Indian labour movement are aware of the existence of this Report and fewer still have pointed out its significance as a source material, having referred to it only casually. Yet in no other published official document do we get such detailed information on the labour movement in Bengal at a very crucial moment in the history of our freedom movement (1920 and first half of 1921) in India.

It should be clearly mentioned here that this note only seeks to highlight some of the facts presented in the Report and is not a study of the labour movement *per se*, during the period under discussion.

The significance of this Report lies in the fact that apart from its depiction of the various aspects of 'labour unrest' of the period (as perceived by the Committee) like causes, demands, course and duration of movement in the different industries (including public transport and public utility services), the very decision to set up this Committee resulted from an awareness (on the part of the ruling class) of the grave situation brought about by the widespread labour movement and the urgent need to combat the 'forces of disruption at work'.

Previous labour enquiry committees were set up in an entirely different situation and for an altogether different purpose. The prime objective of these enquiry committees was to inquire into the causes of labour shortage complained of (from time to time) by various employers of labour. If other issues like wage rate, living conditions, modes of recruitment, etc., also came up before these committees, they were given only peripheral attention. The initiative to set up such committees came not so much from the government as from the employers, because earlier labour movements did not pose any serious threat to the ruling class or to the stability of the alien state power. While studying the report under consideration, the above background should be kept in view.

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Along with the main findings and recommendations of the Committee, the Report encloses two appendices the first dealing with details of strike incidence (in tabular form) and the second providing a list of witnesses examined by the Committee. Unfortunately, details of evidence collected from these witnesses are not included in the latter appendix. I do not know if they were ever published by the Committee or the Department of Industry (Government of Bengal) which was authorised for the first time to deal with labour problems of the province.

On March 4, 1921, K C Roy Choudhury, nominated labour member of the Bengal Legislative Council, moved the following resolution in the Council: "This Council recommends to the Governor in Council that a Committee be formed to inquire into the causes of recent strikes of workmen in Bengal and to advise what remedial measures should be adopted."

Explaining why such an enquiry was necessary, the mover in the course of his speech said: "Strikes and concerted refusal to work seem to be the order of the day and have lately as in the case of Tramways and Lilooah Carriage Workshop men, culminated in terrorism and violence unprecedented in the history of Bengal. It is therefore high time, Sir, that a serious and impartial enquiry into the root cause of the new industrial insurrection is made promptly and vigorously to allay panic and reassure public opinion and devise remedies." The motion was passed unanimously and the Governor appointed an Enquiry Committee consisting of nine members, including nominated labour members and representatives of British industries in the Council. It was presided over by J H Kerr, Industry Member of the Government of Bengal and the report was published in July 1921.

This was probably the only occasion when the Bengal Legislative Council, composed as it was of persons representing heterogeneous interests, agreed unanimously to support a motion brought forward by a non-official member. Not only that, but the government also lost no time in announcing the formation and composition of the proposed Committee, and, as we have mentioned earlier, the Committee completed its investigation and submitted its report within four months from the date the motion was moved and accepted.

Such prompt and urgent action on the part of the government indicates how grave the situation was in the industrial belts of the province. "Strikes and concerted refusal to work" by the entire working class affecting almost all the industries, created such panic in the minds of all those who were, in some way or the other, linked directly or ideologically with the "establishment", that they chose to forget all difference of race, caste or creed and joined together unanimously to suggest means of restoring 'peace and order' in the arena of industrial relations. While previously for the purpose of maintaining a "peaceful relationship" between labour and capital, the government and the employers of labour could think of no other weapons in their armoury than that of repressive measures, the new situation demanded some other solution creating appropriate (legal or semi-legal) machinery for handling labour trouble. Simultaneously, for the first time, a large section of political

leaders and social workers also began to take more and more active interest in labour problems with the view to solving them through constitutional, non-agitational means. It was this common motive that united all the members of the Council so that Roy Choudhury's resolution could get smooth sailing.

In order to appreciate the anxiety of the establishment, it may be pointed out that between 1 July and 31 December 1920, i.e., within a period of six months, there occurred in Bengal 104 strikes—89 in the Calcutta industrial area, 12 in the district of Burdwan (mainly in the coalfields), 2 in the district of Barisal and 1 at Kharagpur. In the first quarter of the next year (i.e., between 1 January and 31 March 1921), there were 32 strikes. Thus, within a short span of nine months, 137 strikes broke out in Bengal, covering, as noted earlier, almost all the existing industries in the province.

Of these 137 strikes, "74 were due solely to demands for higher wages, while in 36 other cases demands for higher wages were coupled with other demands." The Report also informs us that "Of these 110 strikes, no less than 82 strikes occurred in the last quarter of 1920, which also accounted for 89 strikes out of the total number of 137. Of the 27 strikes not concerned with wages, 13 were due to claims regarding overtime, khoraki, strike pay, hours of work, shifts and other conditions of work, 10 arose out of the dismissal or discharge of workmen and similar disciplinary actions, 2 were due to demands for the dismissal of individuals, 1 was due to demand for better facilities for prayers, for Muhammadan employees, and *one strike must be classed as sympathetic, in that the men went out in support of a strike that was being fought elsewhere for objects that would not benefit themselves*" (Italics mine).

The Report also gives us an interesting breakdown of the strikes. "Of the 110 strikes, in which there was a demand for higher wages, 4 were successful in that the increases demanded were conceded in full, 48 were partially successful in that some increases were conceded, though not the full increases demanded, 17 ended in the resumption of work with increases promised or deferred for consideration, but not finally settled, while 36 failed in that work was resumed with the demands for higher wages definitely rejected. No definite information is forthcoming as to the terms on which the remaining five wage strikes were settled. In 1 out of the 27 miscellaneous strikes, the demands of the workers were met either in whole or in part."

Industrywise, we get the following picture about the incidence of strikes. Five strikes or more occurred in the following industries:

	No. of Strikes
1 Engineering, foundry and metal works	33
2 Jute mills	27
3 Transport and storage of merchandise in the port and city of Calcutta	19
4 Public utility services	12
5 Collieries	7
6 Cotton mills	6

7	Railways	5
8	Printing presses	5

The Report also gives us in a tabular form, details of all the strikes mentioned above. Since such details are not easily available elsewhere, a few samples of the type of information available, are given at the end of this paper.

We next pass on to present some select information on strikes as noted in the Report.

1 Strike by Bengal Government press employees (total number 900) which lasted for 12 days, starting from 16 July 1920,

Dissatisfaction with communique of Government of India announcing general terms of a proposed revision of pay, etc., of Government presses, these including—

- (a) 40 per cent rise in piece rates
- (b) standardised hours
- (c) continuance of piece work system

The last was particularly objected to, and was made the main issue in the strike. In the Remarks Column, we find the following comments.

This strike followed in the wake of a similar strike in the Government of India Press, which began on 15 July 1920. The grievances of Government press employees particularly that regarding piece work, had been discussed at meetings of the Press Employees Association, a recently formed union. The deputation of 14 July 1920 were selected at a meeting of the Association. During the strike very frequent public meetings were held. At these, Association officials appeared, but politicians exerted most sway, the men returning from one party to another, and each holding out hopes of Government's surrender. The Association's funds, such as they were, do not appear to have been called upon to any appreciable degree, but a special strike fund of over Rs. 1,000 is claimed to have been collected from publicists and spent on strike relief.

2 Workers numbering 3,000, of the Hooghly Jute Mills, Kidderpore, struck work on 6 September 1920, the strike continuing for 4 days, demanding a 10 per cent rise in wages. On this strike, we get the following details.

6 September 1920 For a fortnight periodic deputations ask the manager for a 10 per cent increase alleging that other mills are getting it. He denies the allegation, but says that if others get it they shall also. The spinners go on strike, and at midday the whole mill is closed down.

8 September 1920 An increase of 10 per cent on pre-war rates to all operatives announced. Effect from 13 September 1920.

9 September 1920 All hands return to work.

Comments made in the Remarks Column above throw some light on the communication system which existed in the activities of the working class. This, in spite of lack of proper, formal organisations, enabled workers of one region to pass on agitational information relating to demands, etc., to

workers of other regions. Individually or groupwise, they transmitted information by personal visits to other factories situated in other industrial belts. This is why some common demands could be raised by workers of different jute mills even though there was no local or central organisation of jute workers. This is corroborated by the following comments of the Enquiry Committee: "A similar demand was simultaneously on foot on the Howrah side. Three concerns conceded a rise of 10 per cent (with effect from 13 September 1920) on the day this strike began. Others in Metiabruz conceded same rise immediately afterwards."

After workers of North Union Jute Mill, Sealdah (numbering 3,000) struck work for seven days from 14 September 1920, they not only succeeded in getting the wage rise as demanded (though not from the date they demanded but from 13 September), but the "same rise was conceded to the remaining jute mills the week following, with effect from 4 October 1920."

The comments made in the Remarks Column regarding strikes in the jute mills within the Howrah city jurisdiction, viz., Fort William Jute Mills, Ganges Jute Mills, and Howrah Jute Mills (all in Sibpur), having 6,000, 10,000 and 11,500 workers respectively and strikes lasting for 13, 11 and 11 days, starting from 23, 25 and 25 November respectively, deserve serious notice.

Special police activity throughout, extra armed men being drafted in.

These three concerns are the only jute mills in the Howrah city industrial group. The Hooghly Jute Mill across the river is comparatively isolated at the Kidderpore side, and belongs by intercourse to the Howrah group, quite a proportion of the labour of the Howrah Mills living in its neighbourhood. The four rises of wages (10 per cent, 10 per cent, 20 per cent and 40 per cent) conceded to the jute industry between 1917 and these strikes were *each preceded by strikes* (italics mine) in this group of four concerns.

(An interesting point may be noted here. In the case of the jute industry, initiative for strike movements almost always came from the weaving department.)

The following account of the strike of workers of Bengal Iron Works, Kulti, has been given in such detail that it is worth quoting the entire Report on this particular strike, because even police records do not always go into such minute details. The factory employed 11,000 workers and the strike began on 25 November 1920, ending on 1 December 1920. The number of striking workers increased from 600 on the first day, to 11,000 on the third day. Regarding the causes, the Report says: "General unrest regarding wages precipitated by objection of foundry men to unaccustomed orders of foundry foreman and to recently introduced system of payment by contract."

On the course of the strike

25 November 1920 General casting shop go out (600 men) demanding

(a) removal of shop foreman,

(b) cancellation of his order that they should collect and remove their own scraps, and

(c) time wages instead of contract piece wages

General Manager offers to suspend foreman pending proper enquiry Settlement deferred owing to orders of Swami Biswananda (follower of Gandhi), whom men's leaders had sent for, that case should be handed over to him Men's leaders visit him he raises question of wage they tell him a rise of 20 per cent is expected on arrival (December) of Chairman from England he advised a general demand for 50 per cent rise backed by a general strike of whole works Letters sent inviting Gandhi and Lajpat Rai

26 November 1920 Sleeper Shop go out (800 men) Meeting held, presided over by Swami Biswananda and attended by the General Manager, the Manager of Foundry Department, the Additional Superintendent of Police and the Subdivisional Magistrate General Manager explains how he proposes to meet the men's demands Men apparently inclined to return, but the Swami lays down that a more final settlement should first be made Meeting breaks up after five hours' session Announced that the whole works will go on strike from the following morning

27 November 1920 All hands join the strikers (total about 11,000)

28 November 1920 Subdivisional Magistrate interviews the Swami and impresses on him his personal responsibility in the event of outbreak of violence

28 November 1920 The Swami presents himself at the General Manager's bungalow in the evening with three of his Committee (recently constituted Barakar Labour Association) and asks for interview on behalf of the men Audience refused On driving away, the party assaulted by some European employees of the company Rumour spread that the Swami had been shot or is confined in General Manager's bungalow Some 2,000 strikers armed with lathis prepare to attack General Manager's bungalow Trouble averted by the appearance of Swami, who urges non-violence

29 November 1920 The Swami declining to do so, the Sub-divisional Officer institutes a case in respect of the previous day's assault on the Swami Sub-divisional Officer induces Swami's Committee and the General Manager to meet the following day

30 November 1920 Meeting postponed owing to arrival of two Barristers Meeting fixed for following day

1 December 1920 Meeting held at Barakar Dak Bungalow and settlement arrived at All hands return to work

Strike partially successful Terms conceded

- 1 General Manager to sign an expression of regret for the assault on the Swami drafted by workers' representative
- 2 No victimisation on account of the strike
- 3 Strikers' demand for a 50 per cent rise in wages to be referred to the

Chairman for decision, the General Manager giving a written undertaking that there will be some increase of wages and that a final decision will be given within a month

- 4 Contract work to be abolished and all workers to revert to the basic wage of 1919 plus 30 per cent unless already in receipt of that amount
- 5 The Foreman and Head Mistry of the General Casting Shop to be removed from the shop for a month, during which an enquiry to be held as to their conduct and result submitted to Chairman for his orders
- 6 The practice of deducting two days' wages for one day's absence to be discontinued
- 7 (a) Workers on daily pay to receive a bonus of half a day's pay for six full days' work done in one week, in addition to overtime for work on week days and Sundays, and (b) Full wages to be paid for X'mas day, Good Friday, New Year's Day
Half wages to be paid for

Puja	2 days
Diwali	1 day
Holi	1 day
Id	1 day
Muharram	1 day
Bakr-Id	1 day
- 8 (a) Sick leave with pay to be granted on production of medical certificate, and
(b) management to pay more attention to arrangements for medical attendance
- 9 (a) General Manager to denounce ill-treatment of workers and racial differentiation in a written circular, and
(b) all complaints to be referred to a Workmen's Committee meeting once a month
- 10 All workers to be paid with effect from December 1920 irrespective of the day upon which the company may call upon them actually to work
- 11 Workers to receive cinders and coke grease for consumption as fuel

We now take the case of a strike by conductors and drivers of Calcutta and Howrah Tramways. This combined with the strikes of workers (1,100) of Oriental Gas Company (which supplied gas for the city's street lights and domestic consumption), sweepers (2,500) of Calcutta Corporation, and taxi drivers and professional drivers of private cars, Calcutta (3,000), lasting for 13, 6 and 15 days respectively specially created that feeling of insecurity among the middle class or 'bhadralok' residents of the city which was expressed so bluntly by K C Choudhury in his resolution on industrial unrest (referred earlier)

Tramway workers struck work on 1 October 1920, demanding 75 per cent wage rise, free kit and reinstatement of two dismissed men

11 September 1920 Commissioner of Police receives anonymous petition

detailing grievances After this date several meetings are held and it is given out that, unless favourable orders are passed on petitions presented to the management, a strike will be called on 1 October 1920

30 September 1920 Men's petition received by company at noon Circular letter issued to all depots asking men to send deputation to discuss matters with management at 11 a m the following day

1 October 1920 The men go on strike without further notice

2 October 1920 Manager attempts to get in touch with strikers, who refer him to the Commissioner of Police He interviews the Commissioner of Police and arranges to meet men on Sunday morning at one of the depots

3 October 1920 None found at that depot Goes to another and makes offers There told the matter is in hand of appointed leaders Later informed that men and leaders are assembled at Belgachia (7 p m) Goes there and arranges terms at 2 p m

4 October 1920 Partial start up Finally settled by concession with retrospective effect to increased rates as from September 1920, at the request of two leaders not present the night before

Results Partial success Concessions granted

- 1 Rise of wages time scale from Rs 19-Rs 25 to Rs 24-Rs 28 with effect from 1 September 1920
- 2 Improved terms regarding uniform
- 3 Dismissed men reinstated

Committee's comments as stated in the Remarks Column

The dismissed men were regarded by the management as mischief makers

The men's representatives were two conductors, two drivers and five gentlemen not in the service of the Tramway Company

Following the strike, the Calcutta Tramway Employees Union was formed

Here reference should also be made of a strike that took place in the mufussil town of Barisal (East Bengal) On 16 November 1920, workers (numbering 598) of Steamer Workshop of Rivers Steam Navigation Co, and India General Navigation Co at Barisal, struck work, demanding

- 1 20 per cent rise in wages
- 2 20 per cent cost of living allowance on same
- 3 free medical treatment
- 4 pure drinking water at shop
- 5 annual increments of Rs 10 for at least 10 years

The workers' cause was pleaded by a local pleader at Barisal and a barrister at the Calcutta headquarters office

We conclude the article with a short review of the "remedial measures" recommended by the Committee, to deal with future labour unrest in Bengal

Analysing the incidence of strikes over a period of nine months (July 1920 to March 1921), the Report says

The strike fever thus reached its height during the middle quarter of the period under review (i.e., October to December 1920) as the result chiefly of demands for increased wages, but just as the strikes in the first quarter (i.e., July to September 1920) were due largely to other than economic causes, so also *the demands of the workers in the last quarter, after the fever had spent itself, took the form in many instances of trivial complaints which in normal times would never have resulted in strikes* (Italics mine)

Further,

The recent outbreak of strikes in Bengal was in fact due as much to a general spirit of unrest as to the specific causes alleged in individual cases, and even if every individual grievance which has been put forward in connection with strikes were remedied, the unrest would continue to give rise to further disputes until its root cause had been removed. Industrial unrest is only one phase of the general unrest which has prevailed since the close of the war in every country in the world.

Before suggesting remedial measures, the Committee concluded, its analysis of the strike events by saying

Important differences of opinion and matters of principle cannot always be settled without lengthy negotiations often resulting in a temporary rupture of relations between employers and employed, but we are convinced that many of the strikes which have occurred during the last nine months could have been prevented or could have been settled more speedily if a more cordial spirit of cooperation had prevailed, and if some machinery had existed for bringing the parties together immediately the difference occurred and before it had time to develop into a serious dispute.

The remedial measures suggested, logically followed from the trend of the above analysis

- a) Creation of Joint Works Committees in industrial concerns, "containing representatives of both employers and employed",
- b) Conciliation Board or panel, "consisting of about twenty members to be appointed by government and to include a due proportion of all classes of the community, both European and Indian, and representatives of both capital and labour", and
- c) Creation of a Labour Bureau, which would supply "prompt and full information regarding the ever-changing industrial situation" to the government. The Committee strongly felt that the "government should have full information regarding these occurrences if they are to maintain a proper watch over the industrial situation." However, pending the establishment of such an information bureau, the Committee "would recommend all commercial and industrial associations to urge upon their members the importance of supplying full and early information regarding industrial unrest to the Industrial Intelligence Officer, whose business it is to keep government informed of such matters."

Thus, apart from immediate success or defeat, strikes of this period for the first time, forcibly established the status of the working class as a class vis-a-vis State and capital in Bengal

OUTLINES OF REPORTED DETAILS OF STRIKES IN BFNGAL WHICH BEGAN IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1920

<i>Works affected and locality</i>	<i>Dept in which originating</i>	<i>Full strength</i>	<i>No of strikers</i>	<i>No affected</i>	<i>Date on which dispute began and ended*</i>	<i>Cause</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
New Central Jute Mills, Choosury	Weaving	4000	650	4000	6 July to 9 July 1920	Proposed arrest of weavers con- cerned in serious assaults upon Euro- pean assistant	5 July 1920—Assault upon assistant (evening) 6 July 1920—Weavers demonstrate against proposed arrest of assaultants of assistant, and go on strike (morning). Rest of mill locked out (after- noon) 8 July 1920—Manager promises deputation not to proceed again anyone beside the four accused (who had got away), if the men return to work (evening) 9 July 1920—All return	Partial suc- cess	The assault case was brought under prosecution
Radha Kissan Cotton Mills, Choosury	Carding	1000	1000	1000	7 July to 9 July 1920	Demand for an increase of wages, created 2 p m and are followed by increases granted in other mills Increase demanded 12½ per cent	7 July 1920—The carding Department strike at 2 p m and are followed by the rest of the mill 9 July 1920—Employers announce an increase of 6¼ per cent and all resume work (morning)	Partial suc- cess	This made a total rise of 31¼ per cent, since Dec 1919 They had received an increase of 25 per cent in Jan. 1920 in response to a demand for an increase of 37½ per cent The Jute mills had recently granted increases, and the wages in jute mills were 40 per cent higher than they were in 1917

A SATYANARAYANA

*Rise and Growth of the Left Movement
in Andhra, 1934-1939*

IN THE GENERAL logic of the nationalist historiography the anti-imperialist movement led by Congress is regarded as drawing together all the "people" against the British. The "people" is here viewed as an undifferentiated category either in terms of 'classes' or 'communities'. What remains, however, insufficiently stressed is the fact that the broad mass of people had their own interests to safeguard, along with a concern which led them to cooperate with the Congress in the anti-imperialist struggle. Therefore, their actions involved them in a particular relation with the nationalist leadership and frequently they developed conflicts with their programme, strategy and tactics.

In this paper an attempt has been made to study such actions of the groups comprising the peasantry, the agricultural labour and the working class as represented by the left, i.e., the Congress socialists and Communists in Andhra during 1934-39 and their aims, objectives and struggles in the context of a particular political development.

I

The abandonment of the Civil Disobedience Movement had left a "residue of bewilderment" and disillusion among the younger Congress members, an entire generation of whom had entered the political arena during 1930-32 and they were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods of struggle and leadership. A majority of them also felt that the Gandhi-Irwin Pact did not give adequate protection to the peasantry and other sections who had suffered in the movement. This feeling of "neglect" was the background for the "socialist minded men" meeting (in May 1934) at Gokhale Public Hall, Patna, when the Congress Socialist Party came into being.¹ For them, independence did not merely mean the overthrow of the British, but the liberation of the common masses from economic exploitation and the removal of exploitation through the achievement of socialism.

During this period Andhra witnessed the rise of several revolutionary societies, such as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Party (HSRP) which aimed "to attain *Swaraj* through revolutionary means". In fact, scores of

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these revolutionaries later became socialists who intended to convert Congress into an instrument of struggle from what they regarded as "merely a forum for compromise with imperialism" Meanwhile, in 1934 Amir Haider Khan, "a Moscow trained Bolshevik propagandist", attempted to form the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in Madras. He was interned before he could achieve his purpose and in July 1934, the CPI was declared an "unlawful association". Nevertheless, some of his followers were able to form the Andhra Provincial Communist Party (APCP) with local branches in Madras, Guntur, Krishna and West Godavari. The first secret communist conference was held at Kakinada, where P. Sundarayya was elected as General Secretary. Since the CPI was declared illegal, the provincial party could not carry on open public activities in Andhra. However, the CPI's "United Front" strategy enabled the entire party to join the Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party (APCSP). In fact most of the communists in Andhra who were active in the labour organisations (the Labour Protection Leagues) joined the APCSP to use it as a platform for their activities.

After the decision of the All India Congress Socialist Party (AICSP) that provincial parties should be organised, the APCSP was formed in June 1934, by "Congressmen of socialist views". The main objective of the party according to N. G. Ranga was, "to convert the Congress to socialism". It was also resolved to expand the party organisation throughout Andhra. Accordingly, branches were established at Eluru, Guntur, Gudivada and Bezvada. Initially, the activities of the party were confined to organising various conferences, holding meetings in furtherance of socialist propaganda, and organising tours of national leaders such as Jaya Prakash Narain, Y. Mehrault, M. R. Masani, S. A. Dange and Jawaharlal Nehru who addressed meetings at several places. During his visit in 1936, Nehru observed "In Tamilnad I had noticed considerable sympathy with socialistic ideas. Here, in Andhra Desa, this is still more noticeable. The peasantry, as well as the young people, have expressed themselves very definitely in favour of these socialist ideas". Various resolutions were passed condemning the ban on the CPI, calling on Youth Leagues and socialist organisations to agitate for the release of Amir Haider Khan and other political prisoners, recommending the formation of action committees to propagate anti-imperialist ideals, advocating the adoption of socialistic methods to achieve independence, and appreciating Nehru's attempt to start civil liberties unions. "Anti-imperialist Day", and "Russia Day" were also celebrated. A secret report noted that, "with a view to capturing the socialist parties in Andhra and carrying on their activities through them, P. Sundararama Reddi and his followers in the Telugu districts concentrated their energies organising the party on efficient lines". The communists were successful in expanding the organisation throughout Andhra and their efforts resulted in the socialists and communists securing more seats in the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee (APCC) and All-India Congress Committee (AICC). Within a short period the communist influence in the socialist party began to grow steadily. By 1937, communists came to dominate both the district and provincial com-

mittees of the APCSP. Available evidence also suggests that by the end of 1937, the Executive Committee of the APCSP was dominated by the communists.⁸

Three points need to be noted here. Firstly, from the very beginning the left movement in Andhra was subjected to divergent pulls. People and parties with different ideologies were attempting to control it. Both the communists and non-communists, viz., the Congress socialists wanted to capture the APCSP and impose their leadership on it. Secondly, the growing influence of the communists inside the party caused concern to the right-wing led by V. Jaggam Raju and B. Rangasai. For instance, when the communists decided to organise some district conferences under the presidentship of S. A. Dange, B. Rangasai, who was the joint secretary, resigned from the party in protest. The socialists did not like the idea of inviting the communists from other parts of India. They openly criticised the Andhra tour of Dange. In 1936, M. R. Masani, the general secretary of the AICSP, unsuccessfully tried to bring about reconciliation between the two factions. Thirdly, despite the opposition of the right-wing, the communists successfully maintained their leadership over the agricultural labour association, the peasant organisations, the labour unions and the youth leagues. As we shall see later, the communists indeed dominated the working class organisations in all the Telugu districts of the Madras Presidency. By late 1930s, majority of the district Kisan Sabhas were under their exclusive control.

In order to propagate the ideals of socialism the left organised "Summer Schools of Politics and Economics" and taught Marxism. In 1937, the first "well attended" school was started by Kameswar Rao "a Russian trained communist" at Kothapatam (Guntur), where 'revolutionary socialism' was being taught.⁹ The basic function of the schools was to recruit local party cadre and expand the organisation. The government viewed the Kothapatam school as "highly dangerous" and decided "to take drastic action".¹⁰ Therefore, within a short period of time they banned the school and declared it an "illegal and unlawful association". They arrested and imprisoned the members of the school. The banning of the school led to widespread protest meetings throughout Andhra. It was condemned as an "unwarranted attack on civil liberties".¹¹ Though all left organisations and local Congress committees protested against the ban and arrests, the Congress leadership in Andhra remained silent. In the APCC meeting there was strong opposition (led by T. Prakasam) to the proposal that Congress should defend the accused and it was resolved "to disapprove the action of the school in disobeying the ban". Thus, there was a considerable difference of opinion between the Congress leadership and the left-wing within the party regarding the ban. It signalled the beginning of a confrontation between the 'left' and the Congress right-wing. By disapproving of the school they (the Congress leaders) acted contrary to the Karachi resolution which guaranteed "freedom of speech, freedom of association and combination". However, hostility between the conservative Congress leadership and the 'left' increased during the Con-

gress Ministry (1937-39) While releasing the organiser of the school, the Congress government "warned" the socialists that "they will not tolerate violence or class hatred". The Prime Minister, C. Rajagopalacharry declared, "while Government will not interfere with the lawful preaching of any political, social or economic doctrine, they cannot tolerate and will take all steps necessary to prevent the dissemination of class hatred and ideas involving the use of violence" ¹² The left deplored the negative attitude of the Congress The Congress socialists wrote thus

"To suppress the dissemination of ideas whatever be their nature, is to sow the seeds of tyranny It may, however, be quite legitimate for the government to nip any attempt to translate such ideas into action These are obviously dangerous departures from the old accepted definition of free speech, departures which left the freedom of individual without sufficient protection To deny the citizen the right of speech is to deprive the state of informed criticism" ¹³

Nevertheless, the opposition of the Congress Ministry did not stop the growth of summer schools and dissemination of socialist ideas During 1937-39 a number of such schools had sprung up throughout Andhra. "There was considerable influx of communists from the north of India to these schools", ¹⁴ noted the Fortnightly Report Important communist leaders addressed "fairly well attended" meetings and lectures The general tendency of the lectures was "to disparage the philosophy and practice of non-violence" The schools intended to direct the students towards active participation in various movements and they were successful in "exciting the sympathies of the students" The influence of Marxian ideas was gradually spreading through these schools Andhra communists were "supplied with a sufficient quantity of Marx, Engels and Lenins' standard works and also a number of books on Soviet Union" ¹⁵ Basic Marxist texts were translated into Telugu and were being circulated Therefore, the summer schools became "a source of dissemination of prohibited literature" "There are indications that such literature is enjoying a considerable circulation in Andhra districts and there is also a tendency to extend the publication of books of this type", ¹⁶ revealed a secret report

Growing communist influence and socialist propaganda disturbed the Madras government They were growing increasingly apprehensive of the increasing activities of the "extreme left-wing", viz., the communists The government of Madras noted that, "socialist thought was noticeably to the fore Government have now a more difficult problem in the spread of communism There is much propaganda going on" ¹⁷ Therefore, they came to the conclusion "that some action had better be taken to show that the government were not prepared to allow free speech and to give a clear warning that strong measures would be taken against seditious" ¹⁸ In an attempt to curb left activity, they began to arrest individuals During his tour Batliwala, a communist leader, was arrested and convicted "The arrest of Batliwala has certainly had an excellent effect", ¹⁹ remarked the Governor of Madras It led to innumerable protest meetings, at which resolutions were

passed condemning the Congress ministry. Naturally, the arrests of Batliwala and others infuriated the socialists and increased antagonism between them and the Congress. The sentiment of the left was summed up by the *Nellore Voice*

"The public fears that this prosecution is but a prelude to a policy of suffocating public opinion and denying the right of free speech which ought to be zealously guarded as an elementary right under any civilised government. The public is greatly perturbed at the idea that this action is highly incompatible with the Congress government and with the declared policy of protecting the elementary civil liberties of the people" ¹⁹

Majority of the local Congress communities also expressed their "strong discontent and disapproval" of the action of the government. Thus the Congress leadership had offended "a large section of opinion" that supported them. However, the left determined to carry on "incessant struggle" against the tendency of the Congress to compromise with colonialism and other vested interests. To be able to compel the Congress to attend to the needs of the peasantry, they intensified the peasant movement.

II

The government of Madras observed in 1936 that "agrarian agitation on a considerable scale is now beginning, particularly in the Telugu districts and that the persons promoting the agitations are in many cases known Congressmen of extremist views" ¹⁹. The socialists and communists developed a basic interest in the agrarian question against the background of a deep agrarian crisis. The APCSP decided "to devote full attention to peasant work" and it managed to organise peasant associations (Kisan Sabhas) throughout Andhra. Thus a communist paper remarked "An irresistible enthusiasm for organisation caught the peasantry. Kisan Sabhas sprang up in numerous villages and the district organisations got on their feet. The membership of Andhra Provincial Ryots Association has leapt from 20,000 last year (1937) to 56,000 in 1938" ²⁰. Meanwhile unrest among the peasantry was growing. By 1940 Kisan Sabhas were formed in 11 out of the 12 Andhra districts of the Madras Presidency. Peasant marches had become a popular weapon. As in Kerala, ²⁰ in Madras also peasant processions were evolved as one of the effective techniques of peasant mobilisation for the redressal of grievances. Andhra peasant marches were said to be "bigger than the biggest that ever had happened in England" ²¹.

The context in which peasant movement expanded was the world economic depression and its aftermath. When the depression set in, the prices slumped. Between 1929-35 a fall of 50-60 per cent was a common phenomenon in Andhra. The fall in the prices obviously was disastrous for the peasantry because it drastically reduced their cash incomes. The burden of normal financial obligation was increased. Peasants' inability to pay revenue and rent regularly resulted in the large-scale accumulation of arrears. Peasant indebtedness also grew. Therefore, the Kisan Sabhas deman-

ded "liquidation of agricultural indebtedness and substantial reduction of rent and revenue"."

With the hope and confidence that the Congress ministry would extend its support, the Kisan Sabhas under the left leadership had intensified the anti-zamindari agitation between 1937-39. Consequently, the zamindars had problems in collecting rents. There were instances where the government had to postpone the collection of *peshkush* of certain zamindars "owing to their difficulties in collecting their rents"'. In Challapalli estate, peasants had begun *satyagraha* in protest against the zamindar's attempt to convert communal lands into *seri* or home-farm". The peasant association objected and did not allow the landlord's agents to occupy land. As the struggle persisted, they frightened and threatened the peasantry. The zamindar also sought the help of police and they compelled the tenants to withdraw the *satyagraha*. The Kisan Sabha efforts to mediate and seek the protection of Congress government failed. In Guntupally and Talasamudram estates, tenant movement was developed over the question of rent reduction. The tenants launched rent struggle and boycotted the cultivation of estate lands. The landlords joined together and threatened the existence of Kisan Sabha and assaulted the local peasant leaders. They fabricated criminal cases against Kisan Sabha leadership. In Talasamudram estate a peasant "was cruelly done to death by the hooligans of the local *sahukars* and landlords"'. Instead of helping the Kisan Sabha, the Madras government had begun security proceedings against the peasant leaders and demanded that they should furnish security "for good behaviour". The charges against them were that they "preached socialism to the masses and created class conflict".

The estate holders (in Krishna and Godavari districts) persuaded the government to issue orders under section 144 on tenants against entering certain communal lands and grazing fields. On the other hand, the petitions of tenants against the zamindars' oppression went unheeded". Atrocities on the tenantry were piling up in other estates. The Mokhasadas (Inamdar) of Nelamallur and Kondaparra (Krishna district) attacked and disrupted peasant meetings with lathis and guns and severely assaulted a kisan. A tenant, belonging to another Inam in Vizagapatam was so awfully harassed by the Inamdar for giving evidence in a court against him that "he had to flee for life". Several tenants in the Vizianagaram estate "were tied up with rope to a pillar for one day for informing the Revenue Minister about certain injustices of the estate administration"'. Landlords' servants in Gampalagudem estate assaulted a tenant leader for having started the Kisan Sabha. The left leaders deplored the failure of the ministry to intervene on behalf of the tenantry and prevent their persecution by zamindars. They condemned the Congress. "The Chief Minister virtually aiding and abetting the diabolical terror of the zamindars"'.²⁸

During the mid-thirties, the left (particularly the communists) successfully developed the agricultural labour movement in Andhra. In his report to the Central Committee of the CPI in 1935 Sundarayya stated that, "Stable unions to which poor peasantry and to some extent middle peasants

look for their interests have yet to be created. Party is concentrating in rural areas at present more in organising agricultural labour than the peasantry."²⁹ To begin with, he commenced work in Nellore and formed the "Alaganipadu Agricultural Labour Union". Its objective was "to standardise by means of legislation, daily wages, annual salaries and to see that a minimum wage is given, facilitating a comfortable life"³⁰

Meanwhile, in Guntur J. Ramalingaiah and others also worked out a programme of work for the development of agricultural labour movement. It soon spread to other districts. Several village associations were formed and agricultural workers were mobilised in large numbers. As a result, numerous strikes and marches took place throughout Andhra. During 1935-37 the agricultural labourers launched five strikes only to demand that their wages should be paid with proper and authorised measures. In Nellore, Krishna and West Godavari several thousand labourers went on a strike to demand "Kind wages should be paid by authorised measures and they should be increased 100 per cent, advances should be interest free, Two hour lunch-break, Twenty paid holidays per annum, Sick leave must be granted and wage cut during the period of ill-health should be abolished, Abolition of *Namu* (compound interest) and current debts"³¹ N. G. Ranga remarked "The strikes had dramatically opened the eyes of the workers of large parts of the district to the possibilities and potentialities of their combined action against the persecution carried on by their employers"³² The rich peasantry tried to break the solidarity of the rural poor. Occasionally, they "organised beatings of the socialist workers who were responsible for the organisation and tried systematic terrorisation"³³ The growing agriculture labour movement also caused resentment among some of the Congressmen and they accused that, "the agricultural labour agitation owed much to the local politics"³⁴ It also caused division within the peasant associations and some of its members resigned as a protest against what they called "the latest anti-kisan attitude"

Despite the opposition from the rural rich and the Congress, the left continued the struggles of the rural poor. It was intensified during the Second World War. Between 1939-44, prices of foodgrain and other consumer goods had risen. It affected the rural poor considerably. In order to increase their profits the rural rich, the trade-merchant took to hoarding. The rise in prices of rice and paddy was said to be "largely due to the fact that ryots and merchants continue to hold up their stocks". Government's attempt to control the prices of essential commodities did not benefit the downtrodden. The poorer classes found that they were unable to pay the prices. There was a great deal of discontent among the poor at the high prices of rice and other food stuffs. In desperation they resorted to looting of the rice mills, fire depots and cloth shops. In December 1942 in Guntur district a crowd of 400 people looted four grain shops and carried away rice and paddy. At the same time, in Nellore five cases of looting by "crowds of poor people" was reported.³⁶ Consequently, there had been a "Marked increase in crime and home-breaking". The Madras Governor remarked thus "The rising prices are

rather worrying me and there are elements of trouble there. There are grounds for believing that leftist elements were to a considerable extent behind the trouble."¹⁸ Communists were reportedly "trying to foment trouble amongst various labourers." Lootings were said to be "instigated by local communists."¹⁹ Therefore, a number of communist and labour leaders were arrested and agricultural labour unions were banned.

During the Second World War extensive hunger marches were organised by communists throughout Andhra. Thousands of agricultural labourers participated in them and demanded food and work from the rich landlords. The first hunger march was organised in Razole taluk (East Godavari) in May 1939. It was estimated that nearly five thousand labourers took part.²⁰ In Narsapur taluk (West Godavari) ten thousand labourers from 80 villages marched to the Deputy Collector's office to demand work.²¹ In Bhimavaram taluk another ten thousand marched to the government offices. In Krishna district, two to six thousand labourers from six taluks demonstrated before the taluk offices. They demanded employment, house-sites and waste lands for cultivation. In Krishna district, "labour have become restive under communist inspiration. Free doles of grain are being demanded of the ryots."²² remarked a government report.²³ From two taluks (Tenali and Repalle) of Guntur district, two to three thousand labourers staged a demonstration in front of the Revenue Divisional Officers. Commenting on the agricultural labour movement the government noted "There have been hunger marches to the Divisional Officers and demands on well-to-do ryots for rice. They also demand various reforms and amenities. It is known that this movement is instigated by communists.

The labourers are tempted with promises of free rice. Naturally, the ryots have become nervous of the possibility of looting."²⁴

The government of Madras considered the agricultural labourers' demands "impracticable" and warned them to "beware of being misled by communist agitators." As the movement grew, they resorted to repression. Many of the communist leaders were arrested and prosecuted. However, despite government onslaught and opposition from the rural rich, the communists were able to expand unionisation amongst the agricultural workers. Unlike the Congressmen, the communists were able to develop and sustain the agricultural labour movement over time. The prevailing objective conditions in Andhra countryside, viz., intensive stratification within the peasantry, also helped the growth of the labour movement.

III

Apart from the peasantry and the rural poor, the communists had also organised the working class. In 1932, a working class organisation called "the Young Workers League" was formed. Since the CPI and other communist organisations were banned, the League could not carry on its activities. Therefore, "Labour Protection Leagues" (LPL) were formed, "as a cover for illegal and underground work."²⁵ Subsequently, local branches were organised in important towns such as Guntur, Tenali, Nellore and

Vijayawada Almost all the members of the leagues joined the APCSP and worked through it. The initial activities of the Leagues were confined to celebrating "Labour Day", "anti-imperialist Day", "Russian Revolution Day" etc. They condemned the ban on the CPI and urged the release of communists. Propaganda meetings were organised to stimulate interest among the workers and induce them to join the unions. They also held study circles and conducted night schools. During 1935-37 the Guntur LPL, was able to form unions among the press workers, jute mill workers and *jutka* drivers. The Nellore LPL was formed "to safeguard the rights of workers and the poor and to educate the workers about Indian Trade Union Movement and problems of world workers". Meanwhile, the Vijayawada LPL organised the strike of press workers and revived the activities of other unions. It led a "Black flag" demonstration during the visit of the Congress president "to expose the reactionary role of the Congress".

Thus in Andhra the left was active and built up well knit organisations for the working class. The Governor of Madras remarked "In Andhra communists had been trying to make trouble by utilizing any dispute between the workers and their employers. Labour disputes are increasing and the local socialists are taking a keen interest in it. At some of their meetings, the socialists indulged in objectionable and mischievous speeches."¹¹ The left appealed to the working class to follow the example of Russia and preserve the sanctity and integrity of the Red flag and to establish a "workers raj" on the model of Russia, "even if it involved the shedding of the last drop of the blood of the workers." They criticised the Congress leadership for its reformist programme and explained to the working class that they could not achieve their emancipation under the leadership of the Congress. Therefore they urged them "to organise themselves into a political party and devise programmes to crush capitalists and establish their rule. To propagate Marxist ideals, communist literature was published, communists also distributed leaflets and the "Karmika Bhajanavali", comprising of Telugu songs composed in popular form describing the hardship of workers and exhorting them to organise themselves into unions and fight for their rights.

The spread of the trade union movement with a radical programme and left-wing leadership caused concern to the government. Therefore, they resorted to repressive measures. Important labour leaders and communists were arrested and prosecuted. Communist literature was seized. The government was keen that "communism should be nipped in the bud", because it was "a real danger". They found that the existing coercive powers were inadequate to deal with the communists and wrote to the Government of India recommending special legislation. The government of Madras informed the Centre thus:

"No judicial action has been possible inasmuch as their activities are subterranean and leave no room for prosecution. This method of attack is most dangerous and effective and the only way to check the menace would be to pass the proposed bill. It seems that measures should be devised now to prevent the deliberate creation of an atmosphere of mass discontent

instead of waiting until the discontent confronts the government with a hard and fast situation ""

Nevertheless, the left continued its work among the working class and it was intensified during the Congress government (1937-39). In February, 1938, the workers of Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company (ILTDC), Chirala (Guntur) went on a protest strike against the refusal of the management to recognise the labour union. When the management dismissed two workers, the rest of the workers refused to work. Consequently, the management declared a lock out. The labour union protested and observed peaceful picketing. The Congress ministry intervened but it was of no use. Police was sent to disrupt the strike and help the management to reopen the factory. They resorted to lathi charge and fired on the striking workers. As a result, three of them were killed. The government enquiry committee justified the firing as "self defence", while the non-official Congress committee condemned it. Protest meetings and large demonstrations were held throughout Andhra and a "Chirala Firing Day" was observed ""¹⁷ Rajagopalachari supported the government action and blamed the workers for having "caused trouble" ""

Another big strike began in the Chittivalasa Jute Mills to protest against labour retrenchment. The entire workers of the mill participated in the strike. The retrenchment was in connection with the general curtailment of production decided by the Indian Jute Mills Association. Following the management's decision to dismiss a weaver, 2000 workers went on a "stay-in-strike". Armed police was sent "to clear the mill premises". The labour union resisted and continued the strike. The police fired four shots and killed a worker ""¹⁸ Instead of sympathising with the strikers, the Congress government expressed "strongest disapproval of the workers' conduct in occupying the premises and indulging in a stay-in-strike as a weapon for redressal of labour grievances." The left leadership criticised the negative attitude of the ministry thus:

"For the workers of Madras whether in Chittivalasa or Chirala, the situation is becoming unbearable. The Madras government enunciated a policy of settling industrial disputes internally. But this wish remained only on paper. In almost every industrial dispute the police and bureaucracy have butted in with bullets, playing havoc with the lives. In almost every instance the Congress ministry either exonerated the bureaucracy or submitted to the dictates of the bosses." "

Fibre and Salt Workers at Kakinada began a strike to demand more wages. The Labour Commissioner of Madras declared that "they were paid unduly low rates of wages and should be raised." Yet the employers refused to comply with his recommendations. Protest meetings were held by the labour union, where "intemperate speeches" were made and "as the workers appeared to be getting out of control an order was passed prohibiting all meetings, processions and demonstration." ""¹⁹ The leaders of the union were arrested. Other local labour unions went on a sympathetic strike. Meanwhile workers of the Kakinada Boat and Steamer Works launched a strike demand-

ing higher wages and security of employment. When the management brought outside workers, the striking workers successfully persuaded them not to work. The strike was supported by the local Congress committee, student unions and other workers' unions. The Vizag Port and Harbour workers expressed solidarity and sympathy with their fellow workers at Kakinada.

The growth and strengthening of the labour unions became a serious problem for the Madras government. It was also an embarrassment to the Congress. They regretted the continued "labour trouble". Although they promised workers' right to strike for wages, the ministry took a hostile attitude. The Congress government thus authorised prosecution "for stirring up strike between different classes" and instituted proceedings against the left-wing agitators. The Governor of Madras observed: "The general labour situation is causing the ministry a great deal of anxiety and they are well aware that great deal of the propaganda is not merely anti-employer but also very definitely anti-ministry." Further,

"The ministers are very annoyed and they are in no way supporting the strikes. Communist influence is undoubtedly behind these disturbances and it must be said that Ministers are losing control of labour. The premier is coming round to the view that it is time some action was taken against communists and I shall not be at all surprised to see him agreeing to some arrests."

The working class movement was intensified during the Second World War. The labour unions had taken advantage of the rise in prices and demanding higher wages. The Chittivalasa Jute Mill workers went on a strike demanding higher wages. It led to large scale internments of communists under the Defence of India Rules (DIR).

It is clear from the above discussion that the socialists and communists were very active in mobilising the hitherto neglected sections of the mass of the people by Congress. Undoubtedly the communists had played an important role in the formation and growth of working class movement. The left as a whole had a considerable base within the working class and launched impressive strike movements. The communists were able to utilise the strikes to extend their influence over the working class, whom they intended to educate with Marxist ideology. Interestingly, they had also penetrated into and organised the backward sections of the exploited class such as the rice mill workers, sweepers, the *jutka* and cart drivers.

To conclude, we have tried to present a comprehensive account of the left movement in Andhra and analyse the manner in which it interacted with the dominant Congress leadership. In this paper an attempt has also been made to discuss the origin and growth of left movement in a particular political context, i.e., the period of the "United Front". During this period all the anti-imperialist forces represented by different political parties fought unitedly against the British and their supporters. The abrupt ending of Civil Disobedience movement in Andhra resulted in the formation of revo-

lutionary terrorist organisation (the HSRP). Though the terrorist movement was sporadic and short lived, it did provide initial recruits to the left movement. Meanwhile some of the young radical Congressmen like Sundaravva joined the Communist Party. He was mainly responsible for the spread of communism in Andhra. As a matter of fact, unlike in other parts of India (Bombay, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh etc.) communism came to Andhra only in mid-1930s. Although the Communist Party was formed in Andhra in 1934, it could not work among the masses as it was declared an "unlawful association". However, the formation of APCSP (in June, 1934) enabled the handful of Andhra communists to join in it and carry on their activities among the workers and peasants and act as a strong left-wing of the Congress.

During 1934-39, the socialists and communists worked collectively to build workers and peasant associations throughout Andhra. Within a short period, leftist influence in the Congress began to grow steadily. Consequently, they were able to hold posts at the district, provincial and All-India Congress committees. By the end of 1939 communist influence was felt clearly among the working class and youth. Especially on the trade union front the communists in Andhra made rapid progress within a very short period of time. While till 1934 communist influence among working class was negligible, by the end of 1938 they were able to dominate various labour unions. Likewise, the communists were aware of the great potential of peasant demands such as moratorium on loans, revenue and rent demand, tenancy legislation and so on, in uniting the entire peasantry in an anti-imperialist united front. They were also able to single out and utilise other immediate demands of the peasantry to integrate them into political activity. Undoubtedly in the context of the convergence of various left forces in the late 1930s, i.e., with the formation of working class and peasant associations, agricultural labour unions, youth leagues and students unions and the increasing influence of Congress socialists the communists played an important role in giving the anti-landlord, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle a distinct leftward orientation. Thus it could be seen that the communists in a brief period made a remarkable impact on the political scene in Andhra. Starting from almost nothing in 1934 they could, by the end of 1939, claim substantial influence among the working class, the peasantry and the youth.

However, the dominant Congress leadership was growing apprehensive of the increasing penetration of the trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and Youth Leagues by the communists. Peasant satvagrahas at Kalipatam and Munagala and working class strikes at Chirala and Chittivalasa are a case in point. The Congress leadership, in fact, did not appreciate the crucial role played by the left in general and the communists in particular, in rousing the peasantry and working class to organised political action. In the name of maintaining "class harmony" the Congress discouraged the anti-landlord and anti-capitalist struggles. The Congress ministry freely and liberally resorted to repressive measures to control the communist activity. Therefore a conflict developed between the Congress and the left leadership. Although the Congress frus-

trated the efforts of the communists to build an effective anti-imperialist united front the latter were able to consolidate workers and peasant organisations by radicalising and winning over the advanced sections of Congress Socialists towards them. Thus by the end of 1930, the Communist Party was able to mobilise various sections of the Andhra society against the colonial state. That is to say, during the Second World War, the communists played an active role in integrating different sections of people into the vortex of the anti-imperialist movement.

Andhra in this paper denotes the following Telugu speaking districts of the erstwhile Madras Presidency: Nellore, Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari and Vizagapatam.

- 1 L. P. Sinha, *The Left-wing in India, 1919-47*, Muzaffarnagar, 1965, pp 304-5
- 2 Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of the Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Hyderabad, 1972, pp 137-39
- 3 *Selections from Secret Files*, Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad, p 2576 (Hereafter referred to as *Selections*), M. Venkatarangiah, *Freedom Movement in Andhra*, Vol IV, Hyderabad, 1965, p 646
- 4 *Fortnightly Reports*, Madras, 2nd half of June, 1934. Home pol (NAI) (Hereafter FR)
- 5 M. Venkatarangiah, *op cit*, p 668
- 6 *Ibid*, p 666
- 7 In 1936, three socialists were elected to the AICC and 23 to the APCQ and in 1937, their strength went up to 7 and 47 respectively
- 8 *Governor's Situation Report*, 2nd half of November, 1937. LPJ/5/197, India Office Library London (Hereafter Governor's Report). In 1934 there were only 4 communists in the working committee of the APCSP, but by 1937 their strength increased to 11 out of 17
- 9 *Selections* pp 4-5
- 10 *Governor's Report*, 2nd half of April, 1937, LPJ/5/197
- 11 *Congress Socialist*, 5 June, 1937
- 12 Cited in *Congress Socialist*, 14 August, 1937
- 13 *Ibid*
- 14 FR 1st half of June 1938
- 15 Report from the Secretary of the Madras Provincial Committee of the CPI to Central Committee, (no date) in *Selections* p 2596
- 16 FR 2nd half of June, 1938
- 17 *Selections* p 4
- 18 *Governor's Report*, 2nd half of September, 1937, LPJ/5/197
- 18a. *Governor's Report*, 1st half of October, 1937, LPJ/5/197, *Lalithgow papers*, MSS Eur F/125/7, India Office Library, London.

- 19 *Congress Socialist*, 9 October, 1937
- 19a M Venkatarangiah, *Freedom op cit*, p 574
- 20 *National Front*, 24 April, 1938
- 20a Prakash Karat, "Organised Struggles of Malabar Peasantry, 1934-1940", in *Social Scientist*, Vol 5, No 6, 1972 pp 4-5
- 21 *National Front*, 24 April, 1938
- 22 *Selections* p 2605
- 23 *Governor's Report*, 1st half of March, 1938, LPJ/5/198
- 24 *Andhra Patrika*, 3 November, 1937
- 25 *National Front*, 19 March, 1939
- 26 *National Front*, 4 September 1938 and 13 November, 1938
- 27 *National Front*, 4 September, 1938,
- 28 *Ibid*
- 29 *Selections* p 2595
- 30 *Ibid*, p 2584
- 31 *Zamin Ryot*, 8 July, 1937
- 32 N G Ranga, *Kisan op cit*, p 17
- 33 *National Front*, 24 April, 1938
- 34 N G Ranga, *Kisan, Op cit*, p 16
- 35 *Communist*, November, 1940
- 36 *Governor's Report*, 1st half of December, 1942, LPJ/5/205
- 37 *Ibid*
- 38 *Ibid*
- 39 *Communist*, November, 1940, p 12
- 40 *Ibid Governor's Report*, 2nd half of September, 1940 LPJ/5/203
- 41 *Ibid*
- 42 *Governor's Report* 1st half of October, 1940, LPJ/5/203
- 43 *Selections*, p 2578
- 44 *Governor's Report*, 2nd half of September, 1937, LPJ/5/197
- 45 *Selections*, p 2593
- 46 *Ibid*, p 2581
- 47 *Andhra Patrika*, 17 February, 1938
- 48 *Governor's Report*, 2nd March, 1938 LPJ/5/198
- 49 *Governor's Report*, 1st half of February, 1939 LPJ/5/200
- 50 *New Age*, March-April, 1939
- 51 *Governor's Report*, 1st half of April, 1939 LPJ/5/200
- 52 *National Front*, 19 February, 1934
- 53 *Governor's Report*, 1st half of March, 1938, LPJ/5/198
- 54 "The Communist activities during the anti-war agitation were wide-spread There was labour unrest throughout the Presidency Communist party played a very dominant part in the strikes and labour disputes Various labour unions were controlled by them" *Selections*, p 716

Academic Marxism Today

DIPTENDRA BANERJEE (ed) MARXIAN THEORY AND THE THIRD WORLD, Sage Publications, pp 325 Rs 195 00

THIS VOLUME is a selection from papers presented at the three-day Karl Marx Centennial International Seminar held at Burdwan University in 1983. The most important contribution of this book is that it shows one how the Marxist approach is constantly conquering new fields, even in the academic sphere, especially in anthropology and development studies, so long the bastion of imperialist ideology.

This should not surprise us. It is a reflection of the success of the national liberation movements since the end of World War II and the phenomenal transformations achieved by those countries which advanced from national liberation to socialism under various class-alliances led by working class parties. However, this does not mean that all those academics who are part and parcel of this trend are actually conscious of this.

For example, Cyril Levitt, in a paper entitled *Marx's Anthropology and the Problems of Evolutionism*, speaks of "the failure of socialist movements in the twentieth century"¹ when it is precisely in this century that the first socialist state, the USSR, was born, it survived a protracted civil war, imperialist invasions and went on to become the main force to defeat world fascism in 1945, it is in this century too that a powerful socialist camp is astride the world, from the Western Atlantic outpost of Cuba to China in the Eastern Pacific, and the world Empires have all crumbled away before the tide of national liberation which could never have survived without the triumph of socialism on a world scale. Still, unaware though Anglo-Saxon academics may be of these historic transformations, their work has had to come to terms with the revolutionary thinker who foretold the collapse of world capitalism and its replacement by socialism. Karl Marx.

The most significant contribution of this volume is to bury the old myths about Marx being Eurocentric, an apologist of colonial rule, an economic determinist, or that he was, in fact, not serious about the mapping out of a distinct path of development for Asiatic and African nationalities and peoples as his main concern was to score a point over an American economist, Carey. In fact, only Heinz Lubasz's paper *Marx's Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production: A Genetic Analysis*, still echoes many of these themes and comes to the conclusion that the Asiatic Mode "tells us little of value about Asia or, by extension, the rest of the non-European world"². It is

obviously not in keeping with the other contributions in general, and one wonders why it is included in this selection at all

Also, it would appear that some of the academic tilting that the authors indulge in, as in Diptendra Banerji's paper entitled *In Search of a Theory of Pre-capitalist Modes of Production*, which makes a point of attacking "the theoretical and methodological wisdom of those fawning Marxist expositions which seek to explain the life-style and dynamics of a pre-capitalist mode of production via an exclusively economic process of surplus-appropriation comparable to that in the CMP" (Capitalist Mode of Production)¹, is a little quixotic. In fact, such a critique of developmental theorists like Rostow, who tries to impose a far more rigid and Eurocentric model on all 'Third World' countries than any Marxist, is really called for but overlooked. And Tom Kemp's paper that touches this aspect is tucked away at the end of the book.

On the other hand, to put the record straight, it is to the credit of the Marxist movement that it adopted a Programme on 7 November 1964, which states "Capitalist development in India, however, is not of the type which took place in Western Europe and other advanced capitalist countries. The present Indian society, therefore is a peculiar combination of monopoly capitalist domination with caste, communal and tribal institutions. It has fallen to the lot of the working class and its party to unite all the progressive forces interested in destroying the precapitalist society and so to consolidate the revolutionary forces within it as to facilitate the most rapid completion of the democratic revolution and preparation of the ground for transition to socialism."² In effect, what the Marxists had digested and put down in programmatic form as far back as 1964 is what the Marxians have reflected theoretically in 1985, and that too, in a university in a state governed by a Left Front Government whose dynamics the Marxist movement of India has evolved and which it runs to this day.

The two papers that best reflect the actual dialogue between the problematic of revolution and of academic theory are Miomir Jaksic's *Marx's Theory of Modes of Production: Problems of Colonialism and Underdevelopment*, and Harold Wolpe's *The Articulation of Modes and Forms of Production*.

Jaksic points out, first and foremost, that Marx never posited a unilinear model of development, but rather, "as in the case of geological formations, historical formations constitute a whole series of primary, secondary and tertiary types."³ Or again, as in *Capital*, where he states "The history of this expropriation assumes different aspects in different countries, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession and at different epochs."⁴

Secondly, he specifically notes Marx's criticism of mechanical attempts to impose the West European scheme on all societies, especially with reference to Mikhailovsky, who "feels he absolutely must metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of the general path every people is fated to tread, whatever the historical circumstances in which it finds itself."⁵

With regard to India, Marx is even more specific in his criticism of Kovalevsky's *Obscannoe Zemlevadenie*, for describing the Indian land-holding system as 'feudal'. Nor is his criticism mere economic determinism, as we see from Banerji's paraphrase of it: "First, he rebukes the Russian sociologist for not seeing that land in India is not as 'noble' in character as not to be alienated to commoners, while in the FMP (Feudal Mode of Production) of the West it is 'the poetry of the soil' which makes it too prized to be alienated to the common people who worked it. Marx then adds that serfdom, 'an important element in feudalism,' performs no crucial role in India, that the existence of the *ikta* or benefice system (grants for military service) in India by no means proves that medieval Indian society is feudal, for such things can be found in ancient Rome as well and Roman society surely is not feudal, that the same is also the case with the 'sale of offices' which, in fact, is not found everywhere in India, that the picture of administration of justice, especially in Civil Law, in Mughal India is totally different from that in the feudal system in Europe, where the superior lord could not enter the jurisdictional domain of his vassal, that 'a great source' of European feudalism is obstructed in India, for political power here is not subject to 'division among the sons,' that the role of European feudal nobility as protectors of free and unfree peasants is almost insignificant in India, that the imposition of the Islamic *Kharadj* by the Muslim rulers in India makes Indian property as little feudal as the *impot foncier* (land tax) makes the French landed property feudal."⁹

Marx's informed and precise objections to describing pre-capitalist Indian society as feudal is highlighted again when he calls James Budd Phear, the author of *The Aryan Village* an "ass" for describing *jajmani* relations as "feudal", and notes that La Touche's *Settlement Report of Aymere and Mhairwarra* "Falsified the facts by the phraseology borrowed from feudal Europe. In Europe, in contradistinction to the East, in place of the produce tribute was substituted a dominion over the soil—the cultivators being turned out of their land and reduced to the condition of serfs or labourers. In the East, under the village system, the people practically governed themselves."¹⁰

These very detailed critical statements over the years, as well as the specific mention of how "Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated progressive stages of the economic formation of society,"¹¹ show that Marx neither ignored nor took the problem of the concrete forms of development of non-European societies lightly. On the contrary, he appears to have become more convinced of the need to study the concrete reality of their social transformations in his later work, as he saw them as distinct from those that had developed the capitalist mode of production in western Europe.

As regards Asiatic society, he was much more precise: "Usury has a revolutionary effect on pre-capitalist modes of production insofar as it destroys and dissolves the forms of ownership which provide a firm basis for the articulation of political life and whose constant reproduction in the same form is a necessity for that life. In Asiatic forms, usury can persist for a long

while without leading to anything more than economic decay and political corruption. It is only when other conditions for the capitalist mode of production are present that usury appears as one of the means of formation of this new mode of production."¹ Thus both pre-capitalist society in Asia as well as its process of transition, neither of these was envisaged in Eurocentric terms by Marx. As such, his reflections on the Asiatic Mode cannot be taken as either haphazard or extrinsic to the theory of the development of capitalism, and today, of socialism.

In this respect, the conclusion of Jaksic points out how "Marx's theory of modes of production is universal yet broad enough to encompass very different processes—the ones in western Europe which were developed on the foundations of capitalism, and those in the East that emerged on the basis of the Asiatic mode of production. Our conclusion is, therefore, that the theory of modes of production makes possible an understanding of development and underdevelopment, and that it is not necessary to abandon the theory of modes of production in order to understand and explain the phenomenon of underdevelopment and replace it by theories of 'unequal exchange,' 'dependency' or 'capitalist world economy'."

"In this respect, in the economic domain, the theory of modes of production could present the basis of autochthonous 'political economies' of particular regions within the general canvas of political economy that explains the principles of social reproduction. In the domain of political theory, it makes possible the understanding of socialism as a world-process that is expressed in a variety of differing paths. In the domain of philosophy and sociology, the theory of modes of production makes possible the understanding of the development of society, the emergence of private property, class and state, in the concrete conditions of history."²

Before this task can be properly taken up, it is necessary to deal with certain radical and liberal-bourgeois theorists (basically of the *néo-Trotskyite* persuasion) as they bedevil the proper theoretical development of the study of 'Third World' societies with concepts like the 'Colonial' mode of production and "the development of underdevelopment" which have nothing in common with Marxist theorisation and have, at best, a merely descriptive status in terms of empirical reality.

The basic problem is that in the 'Third World' while capitalism has imposed itself on pre-capitalist socio-economic formations, it has not succeeded in overthrowing them wholly, and has even preserved them and altered them according to its needs. How are we to analyse this process?

Marx saw it as a dual process, both destructive and regenerative. And perhaps the best analysis of this is in his writings on Colonial rule in India in 1853, where he states "The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun."³ Then he goes on to qualify his statement by unequivocally stating that "all the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on

the development of the productive powers, *but on their appropriation by the people*”¹¹

This clearly shows that Marx’s assessment of colonialism was realistic. He did not consider it progressive as is often stated by the misinformed and by those who have made misinformation their profession, all he has stated is that “modern industry, resulting from the railway system, will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labour, upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power”¹¹. The capacity of the dissolvent to unleash progress is obviously dependent on the classes controlling the state.

Marx is absolutely clear that modes of production coexist and interact in a variety of ways. Describing the transition from feudalism to capitalism (about which even the most virulent detractors of Marx admit that he knew more than most), he clearly states: “The transition from the feudal mode of production takes place in two different ways. The producer may become a merchant and capitalist in contrast to the agricultural subsistence economy and to the guild-found handicraft of the medieval urban industry. This is the really revolutionary way. Alternatively, however, the merchant may take direct control of production himself. But however frequently this occurs as a historical transition, it cannot bring about the overthrow of the old mode of production by itself, but rather preserves and retains it as its own precondition”¹⁶.

From this position, Jaksic concludes that “the outcome is a peculiar coexistence of the old and the new modes of production, which may assume the following forms: the intrusion of the new and the decaying of the old mode of production, relations without change and the growing together of the old and the new mode of production”¹⁷—a situation of stagnation and crisis. Moreover, the words “without change” should be taken in relation to the context of a revolutionary transformation. This in essence, sums up the Marxist position on the process of the *articulation* of one mode by another.

The neo-Trotskyites, overstressing the developmental capacity of capitalism, claim that this outlook is empiricist and dualist. This and other objections to the Marxist position are dealt with by Harold Wolpe, who notes that for the neo-Trotskyite critics of Marxism, “the concept of dualism is left undefined, the term is simply flourished. The reason for this lies, no doubt, in the assumption that the concepts of dualism and pluralism, as these were employed in non-Marxist literature, have long since been demolished. All that is then required is to assert that articulation theory is dualist theory in a Marxist disguise and hence stands already demolished. Secondly, the counterpart of the neglect to investigate properly the concept of dualism is the failure to examine either the specific elaborations of articulation theory or the empirical accounts generated by it, particularly insofar as these are pertinent to the accusation of dualism. Instead, it is simply asserted that articulation theory and analysis necessarily import a dualistic conception of the economy”¹⁸.

Dualism is a specific concept, as Wolpe points out according to which, "some societies (particularly in the non-European world) are not characterized by a single economy, but by two economic sectors, one 'advanced' and the other 'backward' . These sectors operate autonomously of one another—autonomously in the sense that, even where a commodity or labour market or state is seen to connect the two sectors, nonetheless, the economic processes within each sector are conceived of as occurring quite independently of the other sector . A similar dualism (now referred to as pluralism) is said to exist at the non-economic level through a plurality of more or less autonomous social, political and cultural institutions" ¹⁹

Wolpe goes on to point out that "In the first place, articulation theory does not, of course, work with the evolutionist and structural functionalist concepts of modernisation theory . It is concerned not with the 'modern' and 'backward' or 'traditional' sectors, but with the analysis of the processes of the capitalist mode of production and its articulation with other, non-capitalist modes . The concepts of mode of production function not to produce typologies, but as the means for analysis of social processes and, particularly in the case of capitalism and imperialism, the way in which these processes generate relations between different modes of production" .

"Secondly nowhere in the literature of articulation is the view advanced that the capitalist mode of production and the non-capitalist modes articulate but, nevertheless, function autonomously of one another . To the contrary, the central proposition of articulation theory is that the relation of articulation is a relation of transformation of the modes of production implicated in the relationship" ²⁰

On the contrary, if we look at an Indian version of neo-Trotskyist analysis, albeit a crude one, we find a curious phenomenon . While denying past survivals, colonialism is distinguished *structurally* from capitalism and the position is stated as follows "the political economy of growth in India had to start from the colonial 'model', and not the tradition-modernization model" ²¹ Here clearly, while positing the integration of colonial development with world capitalism, the problem of explaining its backwardness or 'under-development' remains, so a certain autonomy develops, and we are told "colonialism brought about momentous social and economic transformation during which centuries-old relationships and institutions were dissolved and replaced by new relationships and institutions (how different is Marx's analysis presented above) "*In the realm of agriculture too, new agrarian relations and class-structure came into being . A new agrarian structure was born that was neither traditional or feudal nor capitalist*" .²² Again, describing 'semi-feudalism,' he states "the new agrarian structure that was evolved to suit the needs of colonialism was undoubtedly semi-feudal but it was nevertheless new" ²³ And finally to a point where the author admits "World capitalism is a single system and colonialism is a basic constituent of this system . Yet colonialism has distinct characteristics of its own . We have therefore to view the same system of imperialism-colonialism in the form of *two separate entities, one in the colony and the other in the metropolis*" ²⁴ Thus, while contending against the

imagined dualism of Marxist analysis, the neo-Trotskyite position actually ends up by not only being dualist, but creating a new typological colonial 'model'—and under this guise, totally whitewashing the reactionary character of colonialism. There is, in fact, nothing in common between such theories and Marxism, whose position has been spelt out above.

Wolpe goes on to show how other theoreticians of this school go as far as stating "that the single major theoretical impediment to the effective analysis of actual production in the Third World is the concept of a 'mode' of production," on the one hand, and on the other "to replicate the dualism of bourgeois social theory."²¹ This approach may consider itself illuminating, but it is not Marxist, and Wolpe's critique of it is a necessary one.

Of the three papers supposed to deal with the concrete aspects of the Asiatic Mode of Production, Lubasz only attempts to show how Marx "since his concern was not with Asia but with the remote antecedents of the capitalist mode of production," did not spend much effort on it or in detailing its dynamics. But Banerji, in his contribution, *Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community*, gives a different picture. He shows how the Asiatic village and its development constantly occupied the mind of Marx, and stresses the fact that "materials of the 1879-82 period are particularly important, for they throw ample light on how Marx's mind had been working towards the last years of his life in the matter, among others of the archetypal form of the Indian/Asiatic village community and its gradual evolution into the full-blown form of the community in post-primitive, civil-political society."²²

In fact, almost unwittingly, even Lubasz shows how central Marx's Asiatic researches were in order to identify the distinctive preconditions for the historical specificity of a capitalist category. "Here that category is surplus profit. Marx needed to account in terms of *his* theory for the fact that part of the capitalist farmer's profit went to the landowner. Plainly the landowner himself was not deriving a profit from the process of capitalist production, since it was the capitalist farmer's capital and not the landowner's which performed capital's mediating role in bringing labour and the conditions of labour together. And Marx was dissatisfied with the Ricardian theory. In due course he found the answer to the problem in the concept of the more or less forcible extraction of a surplus from the producing population. All land rent is the product of surplus labour and always has been. The distinctively capitalist mode of appropriating this surplus is the covert appropriation of surplus value. The pre-capitalist mode of appropriating it is the overt appropriation of surplus product and/or of surplus labour in the form of services."²³ In Asia, however, where there is no appropriator other than the landlord-state, rent and tax coincide, and in fact tax is the most primitive form of ground-rent. Thus, the Asiatic Mode in Marx is connected with the question of the agrarian revolution directly, and also with the alliance of classes necessary to accomplish it. As such, it cannot be wished away from a Marxist standpoint.

Some attempt is made by Banerji to stress the need for studying the

village communities as they have evolved over time, and he shows that Marx was in fact progressing in that direction. But it is a pity he does not take the cue and evaluate the vast amount of work done by anthropologists on the Indian village. Nor does he appear to be familiar with P. Sundarayya's study on the *Class Differentiation of the Peasantry: Results of Rural Surveys in Andhra Pradesh*,⁴⁰ which should be concretely assessed within the context of the Indian National Movement, the Telengana and other peasant uprisings and upsurges, culminating in the land reforms of a bourgeois-landlord government. Similarly, Harbans Mukhia in a paper entitled *Marx on Pre-Colonial India: An Evaluation*, admits the importance of the Marxist approach for coming to the correct conclusion that "The control over labour was exercised through the operation of the caste system which excluded the menial castes from the right to own and cultivate land for themselves, and this in the context of enormous land abundance. It was thus that the availability of agricultural labour was determined by social laws and customs in a specific Indian form of non-economic coercion."⁴¹ However, here again, this can hardly be called an evaluation without taking up an analysis of the attempts at forging class alliances, both by the Indian National Congress and the Communist-led Kisan Sabhas, and their successes or failures during the National Movement and since independence. Marxism, fortunately, does not permit facile evaluations, and Mukhia's paper makes too tentative a start indeed to be called an 'evaluation'.

The paper of Hamza Alavi, *Class and State in Pakistan*, is of interest precisely because it raises the issue of the nature of the State, its control by the ruling class or classes and the use of despotism to keep it going (in this case, military dictatorship), all questions raised by Marx in his study of the Asiatic Mode of Production. If anywhere his theory is relevant in studying the historical transformation of the Asiatic Mode, it is Pakistan, where irrigation is essential to agriculture, where the bureaucracy and army largely living on foreign pay-offs, are relatively independent of the base, and where for much of the time since 1947 there has been despotic rule coupled with an attempt at "basic democracy" at the ground level for the local community.

However, using as he does, the framework of "peripheral capitalism" (a variant of the dualist neo-Trotskyite theory criticised above), he ignores all the rich possibilities of studying the survival of pre-capitalist relations (ossified by the conscious colonial policy of buttressing the landed classes in Punjab and of integrating them in the imperial army as "martial races") under British rule, the success of this policy right up to 1947 and beyond, based on imperialist-bureaucratic and landlord collaboration, all within the frame-work of the specificities outlined above.

Starting from the position that "the Pakistan State was ruled by peripheral capitalism and its structural imperative," he states that while "the State even sponsored the creation and growth of the bourgeoisie," "to describe the latter as the ruling class would be to do violence to reality."⁴²

Again he notes that "The metropolitan bourgeoisie wields a big clout. But in its dealings with the post-colonial state, it has to manipulate as well as

pressurize and threaten, and it has to bribe its way, like the indigenous classes, to get what it wants." In fact, it had to do that under colonialism (especially in the years after 1857) and more so with the advent of neo-colonialism after World War II, which Alavi prefers to see as "peripheral capitalism," which again leads him to conclude "Therefore, while recognising the pervasive power and influence of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, we cannot see any justification in designating it as the 'ruling class'."¹⁴ Of the landlords too, he claims that "one can hardly maintain that they indeed were the 'ruling class'."¹⁵

He realises that his analysis has placed him in a ridiculous position. He asks "what can we make of the stage we have reached so far in our argument, having concluded that none of the three dominant classes can properly be designated as the ruling class? Does that mean, therefore, that we abandon the conception of a class-basis of political power and the State, in favour of some notion of a free floating, autonomous State with its own independent logic and 'will', free from societal moorings?"¹⁶

Instead, it is a state without a ruling class, but with a "structural imperative", performing the function of a Holy Ghost. In fact, "the guardians of the classes in order to formulate policies." They would be very bad representatives of their class-interest if they did. But then, these men do extraordinary things. "They engage in calculations of policy alternative independently of the expressed wishes of dominant classes." However, a few paragraphs down, we are informed that this 'independence' is very limited indeed, for "the question of a revolutionary ideology and rupture with peripheral capitalism is another matter altogether."¹⁷ Then why this new theory to describe a crisis-ridden state dominated by more than one class?

This perspective certainly does one thing more than merely overstressing capitalist development in the 'Third World'. It obscures the reactionary role of imperialism in 'post colonial' times just as Bipan Chandra obscured the reactionary role of colonialism in dealing with colonial India. With regard to the Ayub Khan coup of 1958, he states, "it would be a mistake, however, to jump to the conclusion that either the Generals, or for that matter, the US (so often the *deus ex machina* (sic!)) brought in to explain military coups d'état) favoured a military regime at the time in Pakistan."¹⁸ The same absence of US presence is notable in his description of events leading up to the take-over by Zia-ul-Haq from Bhutto, when he says "In 1977, the army played a not so insignificant role in aligning forces against Bhutto and the PPP that led to their overthrow and eventually Bhutto's execution. But it had to build up its political capital once again, by stages, before General Zia-ul-Haq could actually take over. Several months had to pass between the start of the well-prepared and orchestrated 'popular' movement against Bhutto and the eventual take-over by the army, and that too was to be for a period of three months, in the first, with a promise to hold fresh elections."¹⁹ And this too, at a period when "unlike previous military regimes, it found itself totally bereft of legitimacy and relied on brutal repression to terrorise the people."

Obviously, without powerful support, such an 'independence', both isolated and illegitimate, is hard to explain and we are informed, "Nonetheless, it had to look for a new source of legitimacy. This it decided to build on the basis of a self assumed mission to build an Islamic economy and Islamic polity in Pakistan."⁹ There is nothing new in the ploy whose historical origins take it back to the British policy of 'Divide and Rule' and the formation of the Muslim League in 1906, but it is curious that Alavi should use this flimsy excuse as a proof of Zia's 'independence' when he himself states "The majority of the people of Pakistan have, over the past 35 years, learnt to be mistrustful of those in power who exploit the name of Islam."¹⁰

Obviously Zia's regime is backed by the far more substantial force of US imperialism, and according to Alavi himself "The situation changed materially after 1951 when Prime Minister Mossadeq of Iran nationalised oil, and the Western powers realised that their capacity to intervene immediately and decisively in Iran (which, incidentally, they did) was impaired by the absence of a strategic base in the area, a role that British India had fulfilled before independence. Pakistan was not to be drawn into playing such a role, and a new relationship was forged under US initiative. Pakistan was involved in a military alliance which imposed on it obligations to perform a role within the US strategy for defence of its oil interests in the Middle East. As a result, US military advisors were attached to the Pakistan forces and at GHQ and began to wield much influence directly within the military establishment."¹¹ And while he makes much of the "CIA-sponsored press campaign to magnify the food shortage into a famine scare"¹² that led to the collapse of the Nazimuddin Government in 1953 and his replacement by Mohammad Ali Bogra, Pakistan's Ambassador to the US as Prime Minister,¹³ he spends much time and effort to prove that Ayub's 1958 coup was not to the liking of the US.¹⁴ To prove his point, he quotes Major General Fazal Muqeem Khan "Ayub Khan within the first week of his becoming CMLA and President had completely cut himself off from the Armed Forces and ruled through the institutions of civil government. Yahya Khan, likewise, also kept the armed forces out of all government institutions. Those who were close to the centre of affairs at the time could not escape the conclusion that there was a secret cell in operation, with US advisers, who were at the heart of decision-making."¹⁵ What may be an extreme tactical device resorted to by imperialism in a time of extreme crisis can hardly be taken as the only proof of its intervention. In fact, Alavi appears to be pleading the case for Zia-ul-Haq's independence from imperialist tutelage indirectly as well, when he states that "Although the present military regime has attempted to resurrect a similar system (to Ayub's Basic Democracy) at the local level the system under Ayub Khan had fallen so much into disrepute that the Zia regime has tried to distance it from 'Basic Democracy' by devising a different nomenclature for the local councils. Its structure, however, is similar, and the same set of people are now in control of it."¹⁶ Obviously such a method that underestimates the pervasive influence of imperialism and its local landlord allies in the name of a 'structural imperative' is obviously not Marxism, no matter how much Marxist jargon it is clothed in. Thus, while Alavi had a theme that

really could have led to new and bold insights, his perspective leads him to the marginal conclusion that "the path of exploiting religious ideology, on which the regime is embarked, is one that is leading to political bankruptcy"¹⁷ and not the class-interest of the imperialist classes that had led Pakistan into a crisis from which it cannot extricate itself

The abstraction of the Marxist approach from the question of the seizure of state power and the political organisation of the masses also leads to curious results in Orlando Fals-Borda's paper *Marxian Categories and Colombian Realities*. For example, in his study of the social formations merely as 'a historical sequence spatially situated,' (though claiming descent from Lenin's concept in the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*) comes to the conclusion that "a social formation can be studied as an interaction of regions which are linked together historically and politically"¹⁸ but without specifically relating this to existence of the State or to the question of State-power. From this we can come up with bizarre results

Fals-Borda moves from his regional formations to the theory of Participatory Action Research "inspired by the well-known Marxian principles on social commitment and praxis,"¹⁹ leading to "popular science and radical action" movements and asserts that "action research as executed in Colombia and other countries, has unveiled social, historical and political facts that have enriched national and regional processes with important political consequences"²⁰ We too have had experience of 'action groups' in this country, and while conscientisation groups and movements functioning within the broad political perspective of the theory of class struggle and the necessity of the seizure of state power by the exploited classes led by the working class can have a revolutionary impact, such groups functioning in abstract can even form part and parcel of imperialist strategy.²¹

In fact, Marxists view all such activity, not excluding participation in bourgeois parliamentary politics and the formation of Left Front Governments, from quite a different perspective "First, the Left Front Government is the *result* of a long struggle waged by the toiling masses. *This government is founded on the political consciousness of the people generated by the left and democratic movement*. Secondly, this government is a source of inspiration to the toiling masses all over India. Thirdly a reorganisation of Centre-State relations is needed in the interest of the undeveloped and less developed regions of all states. This requires more resources and powers in the hands of the different states. for the realisation of this demand for additional resources and powers a strong movement for the reorganisation of Centre-State relations must be built up. The presence of the Left Front Government can help greatly towards directing the movements"²² Thus, concepts of region, action and movement make sense, in the case of India, only within the framework of the perspective of a people's democratic revolution, from the angle of the needs of class struggle and to cement the alliance of revolutionary and progressive classes. In abstract such concepts are diversionary at best and at worst, they can consciously be used by imperialism to disrupt the revolutionary movement

Finally, even in the academic sphere, it is now obvious that the cold war attitude to the study of socialism is thawing. While Ben Fine's paper originally presented as a lecture organised by the Shandong Academy of Social Sciences, makes the usual complaint that "no volume" like *Capital*, exists for the socialist economy, he does note the importance of Marx's writings on the Paris Commune, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, even from an academic viewpoint.

Moreover, he provides a number of important insights into the genuinely different system that has come into being, which is a powerful argument against the commonly held bourgeois-radical theory that socialism does not exist anywhere in the world. First, while different forms of ownership exist under socialism, the radically different approaches to distribution reflect a different system of production.

"Under capitalism, distribution relations are based upon the monopoly ownership of the means of production by the bourgeoisie and the corresponding existence of labour-power as a commodity. The value of labour-power is an advance of capital that is a *precondition* of production. Surplus value is the result of compulsion on the labourer to work over and beyond the socially necessary labour-time required to produce the wage. It follows that the distribution between profits and wages is interrupted and determined by the process of production (of surplus value). The coercion to work harder, longer or more skillfully is to the advantage of capital. Wages are the precondition to and profits the result of production whatever the actual timing of the wage system itself. Consequently, capitalist distributional relations are not determined by a distribution of surplus product between the two classes in which wages gain at the expense of profits and vice versa."

"For socialism, the production and consequently the distributional relations are quite different. With the social ownership of the means of production, the surplus produced is not appropriated by one class at the expense of another but is divided for consumption and other purposes according to a definite plan. It follows that labour power is not a commodity. Even if labour-power here is remunerated in the form of wages. Whatever the level of remuneration, it is the *result* of production and not its precondition."

This results in the curious process by which "the bourgeois right of distribution according to work is *eroded* even as it is more fully *applied*. First, more and more goods are provided for collective consumption or at zero or subsidised prices, and these can range from housing, health, transport and education through to the more immediate means of subsistence. Consequently, the significance of differences in wages is reduced in proportion to the level of collective provision. Secondly, however, the result of such collective provision under socialism will itself reduce the basis for wage differentials, as a more equitable and rounded system of education is developed." This, in effect, will help to break down the sexual division of labour, inequalities between town and country and level of regional disparities.

This trend is further strengthened by the different approach both

capitalism and socialism have to the distribution of the means of production "For capitalism, the accumulation of capital is determined by the pursuit of profitability in which the production of relative surplus value leads to a rising organic composition of capital and a relative displacement of living labour", resulting in chronic and growing uneven development, unemployment and periodic crises of overproduction "

"For socialism, there is first a planned division between distribution for consumption and distribution for other purposes. The allocation of the means of production can itself be broken down into various sectors",⁷ and the attending or inherited evils are obviously even easier to eliminate

However, these basic differences, resulting from the socialisation of the means of production, operate in concrete conditions and give rise to concrete problems whose solution cannot be studied without a thorough knowledge of the development of productive forces and the process of class struggle in each country concerned. Thus, from the academic point of view as well, socialist economies become the subject of study as part and parcel of a new reality. However, one thing is clear from the volume as a whole. Neither activity isolated from theory nor theory from practice can deliver the goods. The need is the integrated development of both. And this is not possible outside the framework of the revolutionary movement.

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- 1 Cyril Levitt, 'Marx's Anthropology and the Problems of Evolutionism' *Marxian Theory and the Third World*, 1985, p. 59
- 2 Henry Lubasz, 'Marx's Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production: A Genetic Analysis' *op cit* p. 131
- 3 Dipendra Banerjee, 'In Search of a Theory of Pre-capitalist Modes of Production' *op cit* p. 16. For such a critique see Tom Kemp, 'Industrialisation in the Non-European World' in *op cit* pp. 263-264. This article could have been included in the first section to fill this gap.
- 4 Programme of CPI(M) (ed. 1979) Para 86 pp. 32-33
- 5 Karl Marx, Letter to Vera Zasulich, quoted in Miron Jakic, 'Marx's Theory of Modes of Production: Problems of Colonialism and Underdevelopment' in *op cit* p. 83
- 6 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I p. 513 quoted in *ibid*
- 7 Karl Marx, *Is Otschestvennye Zapiski* Nov. 1877 quoted in *ibid*
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53 Ben Fine 'On the Political Economy of Socialism' in *op cit* pp 279-28054 *Ibid* p 285-28655 *Ibid* p 28756 *Ibid* p 29057 *Ibid* pp 290-291

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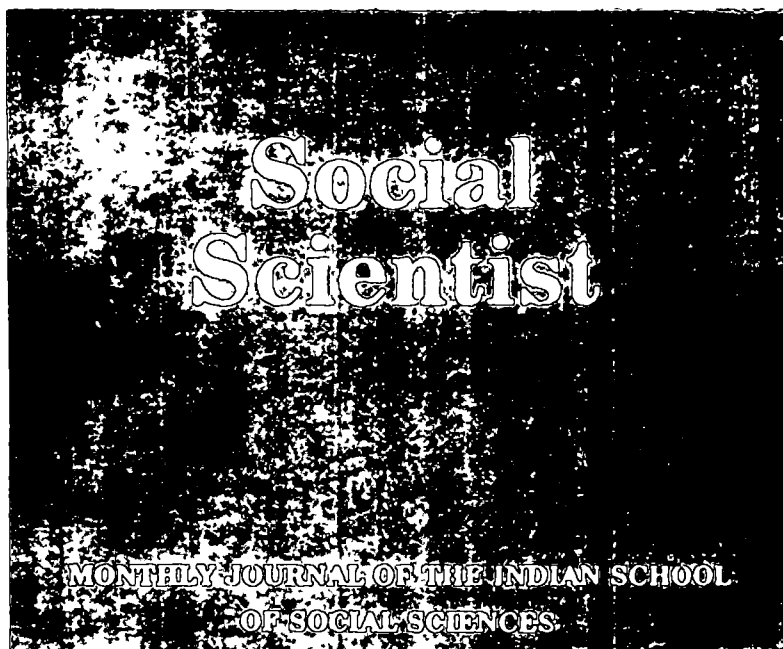
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February-March 1986

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA ● THE COMPELLING
CRISIS AND NEW EDUCATION POLICY ● CHALLENGE OF
EDUCATION ● NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NEW EDUCATION
POLICY ● EDUCATION AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES ● NEW
EDUCATION POLICY, A CLASS NECESSITY ● SIGNIFICANCE
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Articles and review express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

Editorial Note

THE CURRENT number of *Social Scientist* is devoted to a discussion of themes around the new education policy which is being presented to the Parliament. For the last one year, the proposed changes in the education policy which the Government is embarking upon have been debated at various levels in the country. As this debate reaches the forum of the Parliament, it is only appropriate that our journal should devote an entire number for a discussion of some of the issues involved.

The new education policy, as several of the papers included in the current number argue, must be seen as a complement to the new economic policy initiated by the Government. As the focus of economic strategy shifts explicitly towards stimulating export demand and the demand for a variety of luxury consumption goods through *inter alia*, the induction of imported "modern technology", a parallel development in the realm of education is towards building up so-called "centres of excellence" which would essentially train a small and exclusive section for providing the manpower required by this technology.

But the link between the two is more than purely functional one. Both are informed by similar predilections, both represent a withdrawal of commitment from hitherto avowed social objectives, in education policy, the withdrawal is from the principle of free and compulsory mass education. Both epitomise, to use a cliché, an "elitist bias" in education policy, this entails relegating millions to perpetual backwardness through "non-formal education" and "open universities" while the "meritorious", who in effect would be the children of the elite, would be nurtured in "model schools" and "centres of excellence". Both are visualised as constituting solutions, similar in texture of course, to the crisis of the economy under capitalist dispensation. The solution envisaged in the general economic sphere, namely a deliberate solution envisaged in the general economic sphere, namely a deliberate acceptance and official encouragement of a social hiatus in a bid to usher in post-haste, capitalism of the twenty-first century vintage. Needless to say, the strategy from which both sets of policies are derived, is one which is pregnant with authoritarian consequences.

What is wrong with this strategy is not only that it is "elitist", not only that it deserves moral condemnation, but additionally that it would not even make capitalism blossom as its proponents presumably imagine. In the purely economic sphere, the disastrous consequences of this strategy are already evident in the massive trade deficit which the country is currently facing. But if we shift our gaze to the sphere of education, we cannot fail to be impressed by one extremely significant historical fact: no country has

experienced rapid capitalist industrialisation in this century without having made a substantial dent on illiteracy. The nature and course of capitalist industrialisation may have been reprehensible as far as the people in and around the country were concerned, but even the most reprehensible form of capitalist industrialisation has found it necessary to provide itself with a foundation of substantial mass literacy. The achievement of socialist countries in combating illiteracy, of course, has been phenomenal, and need not be repeated here. But in the contemporary world, even capitalist industrialisation, if it is to attain a degree of rapidity, cannot be sustained without an attack on mass illiteracy. Whether we look at Japan or South Korea, this lesson comes through clearly.

A notable feature of the Indian scenario, which is both a symptom of as well as a contributory factor towards the feebleness of our capitalist development, has been the existence of pervasive mass illiteracy even four decades after independence. The roots of this phenomenon are perhaps the same as those of the feebleness of capitalist development itself, namely the pre-capitalist relations with which capitalism has come to terms. But, be that as it may, to think of a burgeoning capitalist development without getting to grips with this essential fact is absurd. And herein lies the contradiction of the new education policy.

SITARAM YÉCHURY*

Educational Development in India

BY NOW it is fairly certain that the current session of Parliament will adopt a new education policy. During the past one year, the country has been debating the changes that were proposed by the Rajiv Government. In fact, it would be wrong to say that the country has been debating it since less than 40 million of the 700 millions of our countrymen are in a position to read the newspapers. Nevertheless, on the one hand there has been the officially sponsored debate with the “educationists”, administrators and sychophants heralding the policy as the harbinger of the 21st century. On the other hand, a widespread debate is taking place amongst the academic community—students and teachers—and people at large which is generating a groundswell of public opinion opposing the new education policy as a strategy that will increase illiteracy and take India to the 21st century, leading the world of illiterates. However, even while such a debate has been going on, the Government has put into effect the new policy through the Seventh Five Year Plan and this year’s budget.

This education policy is neither an accident nor an aberration. It is the logical corollary to the new economic strategy adopted by the ruling classes. Inherent in the path of capitalist development in India is the fact that the domestic market becomes increasingly narrow. This places increasing reliance on exports and changes in the product-mix, catering to the luxury demand of the rich. The crisis, constantly intensified by the deepening international capitalist crisis, requires of the Indian ruling classes to rely increasingly on capital intensive technology. This necessity finds expression in the new economic strategy adopted by the Rajiv Government.

There is an important consequence of applying such a strategy to the field of education. The large scale induction of modern technology requires a manpower capable of manning it. Further, by its very nature of being capital intensive, it requires a small section trained to man such technology. The success of such a strategy, amongst others, depends on training an exclusive section competently while the vast masses can remain illiterate. So the education system has to be reoriented to meet the demands of modern technology, while at the same time the expenditure on education outside of this requirement needs to be reduced. This in fact, is the essence of the new policy which is reflected in the decision to produce the required intellectual manpower through the ‘model schools’ and ‘centres of excellence’, while consigning the

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millions to ignorance and backwardness through 'non-formal education and 'open universities'

During the course of the debate on this policy many issues have been raised that tend to obscure the basic intention of the ruling party in putting forward this new education policy. Why are changes in education policy ever made? What factors determine the extent and type of education that is provided under various social systems and at various points of time? Is education to be confused with mere instruction?

It is necessary to put the present policy in a historical perspective with specific reference to the evolution of the existing education system in our country, in order to understand the fact that the changes in the education system were always determined *in the main* by the contemporary needs of the ruling classes. This is the express, if limited, purpose of this article.

The Marxist Approach

Education understood as mere instruction existed in the most primitive forms of social organisation. The purpose it served in these societies was to transmit the skills—hunting, food gathering, etc.—to the younger generation in order to augment the existing level of productive forces and to replace the personnel eliminated through the ageing process. The process of social development, the increase in population and its needs, led to increase in productivity and then to the eventual division of labour. Division of labour, necessitated by the increases in social needs and productivity, becomes the elemental factor propelling the advance of human civilisation. Initially, based upon natural factors such as sex, natural dispositions (strength, disabilities, etc.) the division of labour between material and mental labour appears. This division ushers in a new level of social organisation and at the same time signifies the division of society into different classes and with this development arises a stage where one section of the population does the work of discharging the simple manual labour and few privileged persons occupying themselves with directing this labour.

Engels observes, "It is clear that so long as human labour was still so little productive that it provided but a small surplus over and above the necessary means of subsistence, any increase of the productive forces, extension of trade, development of the state and law, or foundation of art and science, was possible only by the means of a greater division of labour. And the necessary basis for this was the great division of labour between the masses discharging simple manual labour and the few privileged persons directing labour, conducting trade and public affairs, and, at a later stage, occupying themselves with art and science."²

With the development of class divided society, education ceases to be merely a process of instruction and transmission of skills. In addition, to transmitting the necessary skills, education becomes the process of transmitting also a consciousness specific to that form of social organisation. Marx and Engels note, "Division of labour only becomes truly such from the

moment when a division of material and mental labour appear. From this moment onwards, consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness, that it really represents something without representing something real, from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and proceed to the formation of "pure" theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc."³

In class societies, the nurturing of a specific consciousness becomes necessary for the continuance of the class rule. The process of education under the class society, therefore, embraces the process of generating and nurturing a consciousness in the interest of the ruling class.

As Marx and Engels observe, "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch, the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which made the one class the ruling one, and therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things, consciousness, and therefore, think. In so far, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things, rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and *regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age*, thus their ideas' are the ruling ideas of the epoch" (emphasis added).⁴

However, in all class divided societies, as Kalinin notes, "Slave holding, feudal, capitalist—the ruling classes strove to mask their rule and palm off their narrow class interests as the interests of the whole society. They served up their exploited morality as a morality of all mankind, raised it to the rank of an external truth based on foundations existing outside of human society, independent of man and of the given economic and social system and proceeding as it were from God. Thus in a class society, there never has been, nor can there be, education outside or above classes."⁵

In societies prior to capitalism, the process of education was essentially confined to those sections belonging to the ruling classes, i.e., to those, who consequent to the division of material and mental labour, had leisure at their disposal to conduct the affairs of the society and planned productive activities. The example of Greek institutions and more specifically, the Indian system of "Gurukuls" illustrate this fact. The story of 'Ekalavya' illustrates the fact that not only was education confined to the ruling classes but that the labouring classes were disallowed from learning.

The Two Faces of Education

With the development of productive forces and the division of society

into two antagonistic camps—bourgeoisie and the proletariat—and when all relations in society have subsumed under the dominant capital labour relationship, it becomes necessary for the bourgeoisie to impart technical skills and knowledge to the proletariat whose development is an essential element in the working of the capitalist system. As Kalinin notes, “The ideal of the capitalists is to see in the workers and peasants as their obedient servants bearing the burden of exploitation without a murmur. Proceeding from this, the capitalist would prefer not to foster daring and courage in the workers and peasants, would prefer not to give them any education whatsoever. But you is easier to cope with people who are ignorant and down-trodden. But you cannot win wars of conquest with such people, and they could not operate machines and machine tools without elementary knowledge. Mutual competition under conditions of technical progress, the armaments race, etc., on the one hand and the struggle of the workers and peasants to acquire an education, on the other hand, compel the bourgeoisie to give the working people at least the crumbs of knowledge while wars of plunder force it to cultivate among the working masses stamina, courage and other qualities dangerous for the bourgeoisie.”⁶

Thus it becomes necessary for the capitalists to provide a certain degree of education to the working people, which will serve and strengthen its class domination. But while ensuring the spread of education, this in itself creates conditions for raising the level of consciousness of the working class. As Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*, “Not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death unto itself. it has also called into existence the men who are to wield these weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.” Further, they note, “the bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education. In other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.” The bourgeoisie for its own advance, initially in its fight against feudalism and monarchy and later for the consolidation of its rule, gives the proletariat knowledge and skills which in turn can be used by the organised working class as weapons against this very bourgeois class rule. Education, under capitalism, therefore, assumes a contradictory nature. A reflection of its basic contradiction i.e., the social nature of production and individual nature of appropriation.

The Historical Background

While spread of education beyond the confines of the ruling classes was necessitated by the development of capitalism, this by no means meant that the class division in education was eliminated. Such class divisions continue as long as society is divided into classes. Studies in the development of education in the industrialised countries confirms the pattern that the mass of working people are to be educated to the extent necessary and this was determined by the development of the productive forces alone. Soon after the American independence in 1779, Thomas Jefferson, with the farsightedness of the rising bourgeoisie, moved the “Bill for the More General Diffu-

sion of knowledge” Though this bill was defeated at that time, the philosophy behind it was to influence the development of the American education system in later years. This philosophy aimed at preparing the young people for one of the two groups in society, “labouring and the learned” Jefferson argued for a three-tier education system. The first level consisting of 3 years of elementary schooling at state expense. “The best of such boys would then proceed to the grammar school to be supported by state expense” One each from these schools will then go to the college to be, “educated, boarded and clothed for three years the expense of which annually shall be paid by the treasury” The idea was that such a school system would engage in ‘raking a few geniuses from the rubbish’⁷

While the need for developing a system of education where training and knowledge would support and strengthen the capitalist rule was considered essential, at the same time, education was also seen as an element of capitalist social control. As Rev. George Washington Hosmer who contested from Buffalo (USA) and led a struggle for public education in 1840s said, “thousands among us have not dreamed of the effects of popular education they have complained of its expensiveness, not forseen that it will diminish vagrancy and papuperism and crime, that it will be an antidote to mobs and prevent the necessity of a standing army to keep our own people in order. Every people may make their own choice, ‘to pay teachers or recruiting sargents’, to support schools or constables or watchmen”⁸

The growth of capitalism, the subsequent crisis and working class struggles, the first factory strikes in the United States taking place in 1824, formed the background for the American Public School system. Its two main ideological under-pinnings were ‘equality of educational opportunity’ and ‘upward social mobility’. By 1942, 80000 schools were established essentially for the white population and its philosophy was, nevertheless, to create an illusion among the people that the capitalist system would benefit all equally and that upward social mobility is possible within the system of capitalism. The establishment of such schools was, in itself, the ideological expression of the capitalist class rule.

Contradictions Within Bourgeois Education

With the emergence of monopoly capitalism, the educational system develops in such a manner that science and knowledge are regulated and placed at the disposal and service of capital. Marx’s analysis in *Capital* reveals that in a capitalist society, science becomes “a productive force distinct from labour and pressed into the service of capital”⁹ In the era of monopoly capitalism, scientific research is more highly organised than ever before, but always with the over-riding aim of private profit, and devoted increasingly to war. The training of natural scientists is so departmentalised as make it difficult to acquire a theoretical grasp of natural science as a whole, and such students receive no training at all in the study of human society. Conversely, social and historical studies are cut off from the natural sciences and from each other. Economics is separated from history and both from politics. His-

tory is taught as though it was not a branch of science at all. In the natural sciences, the student may know nothing of Marxism, yet at least he recognises the dialectical processes in nature, even though he does not know them by that name, but the laws of dialectics mean nothing to the bourgeois historian, who does not even recognise the class struggle.

This separation of natural sciences from social sciences and the separation of various branches of social sciences, serves the purpose of preventing the student from acquiring a knowledge of the totality of his or her existence and on the other hand, gives him or her a distorted world view. An educational system that is deliberately used by capitalism, in its offensive against Marxism and Socialism. Education under capitalism, therefore, reflects the conflict in bourgeois consciousness between the need to develop science as a productive force and the need to conceal the true relationship between labour and capital.

Thus, education under capitalism while making science and knowledge subservient to the interests of capitalism also becomes highly receptive to the process of development of capitalism. While the development of capitalism necessitated an increasing emphasis on efficiency, this found reflection in the educational system. Concepts of 'Career education', 'individualised education' etc., were formulated. A career began at the elementary school level, with the introduction of the IQ and Aptitude Tests, and individualised feeding for the job market by 'ability groups'. However, with the crisis, the education system began to turn out more people than could be absorbed by the capitalist market. Hence, it became necessary to either curtail education facilities or to lengthen the process of education. What we are witnessing today in India is precisely a process which is linked to the crisis of capitalism. In 1959, the Carnegie Commission Report of the USA titled 'The American High School Today' suggested a three-tier system introducing the concept of junior colleges which were the only channel through which college enrolment would be made. They ultimately became the biggest means of eliminating students from higher education. State intervention could also be seen in USA through reduced allocations for education, attempts to raise 'standards', charging tuition fees, ending open admissions to the New York City University etc. In 1975-76, the Evers College which had a 84 per cent Black student body, was closed down and an attempt made to close the Hostos College which was predominantly for Puerto Rican students.

So, we see that education under capitalism places science and knowledge at the disposal of capital and acts as the ideological instrument to support the rule of capital. However, such an education also provides the consciousness which can be used by the proletariat as a weapon in its struggle against the capitalist state. As this contradiction comes out into the open, the state steps up its attack on the democratic rights and represses the struggles of those who receive this education, particularly when it is linked with the struggles of the working people. In this process, education itself, may become the casualty. However, the ruling classes, at all times, also attempt to ensure that the basic class requirement for their continued rule is produced.

if necessary at gunpoint

It is only under socialism, with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the majority over the minority, that knowledge is freed from its bondage. Instead of serving the interests of capital, the educational system would now serve the interests of the entire society, its working people. For the first time, knowledge is placed, unfettered, at the disposal of the human race, for its advancement. Creativity blossoms instead of being stifled under the rule of capital and its profit motive.

In the light of this historical background and the perspective provided by Marxist analysis, namely that the extent and type of education at any point of time is determined, in the main, by the needs of the ruling classes, we examine the evolution of the Indian educational system in the colonial period, the changes that have been effected since Independence. These changes form the background to the reforms being proposed today.

Colonial Education

The origins of the present educational system in India and its evolution during the colonial period was directly linked with the efforts of the British to consolidate their rule. Initially, their efforts were directed towards conciliation with the upper class 'natives'. One of the ways in which this understanding expressed itself was the official patronage given to traditional and oriental learning. Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasa in 1791 and Jonathan Duncan established the Benaras Sanskrit College in 1792.

In Britain, however, there was a sharp reaction and opposition to his point of view from various quarters including Evangelists, Liberals and Utilitarians who were all together in strongly recommending the introduction of English education. The spokesman of the first school of thought was Charles Grant who served the East India Company's Administration for 40 years in London and Calcutta. Writing in 1792, he observed that, "The people of Hindustan are a race of men lamentably degenerate and base. Hinduism is a fabric of error." He further argued that the ignorance and backwardness of the Hindus could be removed only with the introduction of Protestant Christianity and arts and sciences of Europe.¹⁰

The most famous spokesman of the Liberals was Thomas Babington Macaulay, who in his famous minute of February 2, 1835 observed that "a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." James Mill, the chief spokesman for the English Utilitarians remarked, "The great need should not have been to teach Hindu learning but useful learning", dismissing the former as "obscure and worthless knowledge."¹¹

Notwithstanding the different points of view, it is clear that the ruling intellectual opinion in Britain during the end of 18th century and the first half of the 19th was to encourage English education. In 1813, the Evangelists succeeded in obtaining entry for Christian missionaries and the 1813 Charter

of the East India Company set aside, "a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and also the introduction of a knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants" This, infact, reflected the conflict of opinions of the period

A section of Indians actively advocated the spread of English Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote to the Acting Governor General, Lord Amherst protesting against the establishment of a Sanskrit College which would "load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties, metaphysical description of little or no practical use to professions or society"¹² After the 1913 Charter, the initiative to establish English education was taken by those sections which had business and commercial links with the British, leading to the establishment of the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 and the Elphinstone College in Bombay in 1827

Meanwhile in Britain, the debate between the Anglicists and the Orientalists continued This was reflected in their even division in the "General Committee for Public Institution" that was constituted in 1823 to formulate an education policy Unable to arrive at a conclusion, this committee appealed to the Governor General, Lord Bentuck to take a decision in 1835 Lord Bentuck, in turn, asked Macaulay as President of this Committee, to give his opinion The result was the famous note of February 2, 1835 in which Macaulay noted that selective natives must be educated, "as interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" A month later, Bentuck ruled, "the great object of British Government was henceforth the promotion of European literature and science—all funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone"

There were at least three important reasons that had a significant bearing on this ruling of Bentuck The first was the growing opinion and the recognition of the fact that the British could derive political benefits from English education Amongst many others who held this opinion, Charles Trevelyan (1838) noted that, "The spirit of English literature cannot but be favourable to the English connection" and argued that this would stop Indians from treating Britishers as foreigners and make them "Intelligent and zealous cooperators"¹³

Secondly, the framing of the education policy was guided by the practical administrative needs of the colonialists At the time of the passing of the 1833 Charter Act, the East India Company was in serious financial difficulties One method suggested was to cut down expenditure on European employees and instead employ Indians at a much lower salary The 1833 Charter opened the lower order civil service jobs to Indians But this required English educated Indian clerks Hence the policy of 1835

Thirdly, English education was also seen as an important basis for expanding the British market in India by rearing English values and tastes As

Macaulay noted, "wearing our brand of cloth and working with our cutlery they should not be too ignorant or too poor to value and buy English manufactures." A bigger market for Lancashire and Sheffield had to be created. Macaulay's Note, Bentick's ruling and the establishment and growth of English education in India was an expression of the direct needs of the ruling colonial power. The education system in India, a legacy that continues till date, originated not because of any individual or intellectual opinion but arose out of the contemporary needs of the ruling classes.

In 1837, the English replaced Persian as the official and Court language and in 1844 Hardinge announced preference for English educated Indians in the Civil Service. These two steps effectively sealed any growth of education other than English education. The Hardinge Proclamation of 1844 had its desired effect. The demand for English education rose sharply leading to unplanned growth of institutions. Within a few years, the need arose for a systematic and an effective administrative system. Coupled with this, questions regarding the degree of economic liability that the company would undertake were raised. Consequently, in 1853, an enquiry was conducted which resulted in the famous despatch of Sir Charles Wood to the Board of Directors in 1854. Described by many as the 'Magna Carta' of English education in India, this despatch set forth a comprehensive scheme of education for the country. Following the political, economic, administrative and cultural needs of the British, this despatch reaffirming the policy laid down in 1835, recommended the concentration of higher education to the upper classes. Its recommendation for the establishment of universities in India led to the establishment of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras Universities in 1857. The Woods Despatch also suggested the administrative machinery for the education system which included among other things, the university senates, the specific methods of examination, setting up of separate departments of public instruction under an important officer called the Director of Public Instructions. In fact, the entire administrative set up that continues to exist even today. The despatch also indicated that there should be a gradual withdrawal of the company's liability towards secondary school education. The Wood's despatch, therefore, was also an expression of the contemporary needs of the colonial powers in India.

The next two decades which witnessed considerable growth of higher education and induction of Indians into the lower order of the civil services, gave rise to the need to consolidate the structure as well as find methods of reducing the expenditure on education. The result was the appointment of a commission in 1882, "to enquire into the manner in which effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 and to suggest fresh measures, as it may think desirable, in order to the further carrying out of the policy therein laid down." Popularly known as the Hunter Commission, it recommended the gradual withdrawal of the State from direct support and management of institutions, suggested general guidelines for college fees, that secondary education, as far as possible, should be provided only on a grant-in-aid basis and that the state should withdraw as early as possible from

the direct management of the secondary schools. In effect, it recommended the consolidation of the existing system while reducing costs.

The next twenty years saw a tremendous growth of English education. In 1882, there were 63 English Arts colleges, in 1902, there were 140. The number of unaided English Secondary schools increased from 2133 to 5097. There was a marked increase in the unaided colleges and schools privately managed by Indians. There were only eleven such colleges in 1882 with 716 students and in 1902 this increased to 53 colleges with 5803 students. The number of such schools doubled and the number of students increased threefold.¹⁴

This growth reflected the fact that English education was regarded as a necessity for employment. Under colonial conditions, with the disintegration of traditional crafts, the only avenue possible for meaningful employment was English education. The Hunter Commission report provided the basis for Indians to take the initiative in setting up such institutions.

Impact of National Movement

This growth was taking place at a time when the aspirations of the Indian bourgeoisie was finding expression. As class antagonisms develop, sharpen and express themselves in the struggles of the contending classes, these find expression in the realm of ideas and consciousness. The establishment of Indian National Congress, the rise of mass discontent against the colonial administration raised a number of issues about British rule in India. This had its impact in the colleges. The consciousness and exposure that accompanied English education was finding an expression that was not conducive to continued British rule. Though this feeling had not yet led to the demand for complete independence and was confined to describing the rule as 'un-British' and demanding the Westminster model for India, it nevertheless caused problems for the British rule. "It was in the time of Lord Dufferin that higher education came to be regarded as the root cause of the growing unrest in the country. Confidential and semi-confidential circulars were issued to local authorities to curtail government grants to universities and colleges. British officials saw a direct link between English education and use of Indian nationalism."¹⁵

One of the many incidents, will illustrate the British 'concern'. In 1897, in the year of the plague, there was mass discontent against the inadequate administrative steps taken and specifically against the harassment of Indians by British soldiers. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was in the forefront of this attack against the British in Poona. The public anger resulted in the murder of the Collector and Plague Officer of Poona, Mr. Rand and his assistant. Damodar and Balkrishna Chepakar were executed for the murder. Both were well educated. Tilak was charged with sedition and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment. Following this, the Secretary of State, Lord Hamilton wrote to Curzon finding it "impossible to dissociate their ideas and their hatred of England from the course of education and training,

through which they have passed ”

Curzon proceeded to initiate steps for reforming the education system in order to control the growth of Indian nationalism. However, in his address at the Simla Conference in 1901, he refrained from making any reference to the political considerations that led him to such educational reform. He was congratulated by Lord Hamilton for avoiding any reference to political considerations and instead emphasising the necessity for reforms on educational grounds alone. This process led to the establishment of a commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Thomas Raleigh in 1902 which became the basis for the 1904 Act.

These developments at the turn of the century were, in fact, a landmark. The educational system that the British had worked out to consolidate its rule was providing results that were not entirely to its own liking and in an embryonic form threatened its rule. Within four decades, the educational system was producing results contrary to its objectives. As we argued earlier, this was a reflection of the aspirations of the class—the Indian bourgeoisie—that was seeking release from colonial bondage. It would be wrong to conclude, as many bourgeois historians do, that it is the educational system that generated the rise of Indian nationalism.¹⁶ On the one hand, the class needs dictated the spread of English education, and on the other hand, it generated a consciousness that could be used against that very rule. The “political unrest” was an expression of a rising class (the Indian bourgeoisie) and its aspirations, which was still in the process of defining its objectives.

In a sense, this marked a turning point in the colonial government’s education policy. The doctrine that the State should not interfere in education was abandoned and instead a policy where the state would have the initiative and control a planned system from the Centre, was advanced. Curzon believed that the Government would have to reassert “a responsibility which there had been a tendency to abdicate”¹⁷

Thus came the 1904 Act on the basis of the Raleigh Commission. The Report noted, “In all matters relating to higher education, efficiency must be the first and paramount consideration. It is better for India that a comparatively small number of young men should receive a sound liberal education than that a large number should be passed through an inadequate course of instruction leading to a depreciated degree.”¹⁸ This, in fact, justified what Curzon emphasised: “It is quality, not quantity that we should have in view.”

The attempt was to control the growth of political awareness in Indian universities, control the administration of universities and colleges and restrict educational opportunities. Accordingly, the Commission recommended, amongst other things, checking the growth of higher education, reconstituting the senates giving Europeans a majority, revising conditions of affiliation and recognition, control over text books etc. Immediately after the 1904 Act, the problem of controlling schools arose and the Act had to be amended so that no new school could be opened without prior recognition.

This was contained in the 1913 education policy resolution

• Struggle for Expansion of Education

Understandably, there was a sharp reaction from the leaders of the national movement, who took up cudgels against the proposed curtailment. On the contrary, they raised the demand for expansion and spread of education. The Indian National Congress at its sessions in 1902, 1903 and 1904 adopted resolutions condemning the Raleigh Commission report and the Act. Indians in the senates took up the issue vehemently and drew the debate on to the streets. Surendranath Bannerjee and Gopal Krishna Gokhale led the protests.

The Indian bourgeoisie saw in this a clear attempt on the part of the British to consolidate its rule and to deliberately neglect the dissemination of scientific skills and confine themselves to producing administrative clerks. Visualising the need for such personnel for the development of capitalism in Independent India, Jamshedji Tata, with the vision of a rising bourgeoisie, wrote to Lord Curzon urging the expansion of technical institutions. His request being refused, Tata worked out a scheme for starting a research institute for training Indians in advanced sciences which eventually led to the establishment of Indian Institute of Sciences at Bangalore in 1909. In fact, the demand for technical education existed since the 1880s. Faced with the refusal of the British to open such institutions, Indians established the first of such schools in 1887 and the Victoria Jubilee Technical School in 1904. An Association was formed in Calcutta for the advancement of scientific and industrial education with the express purpose of sending Indians to U.K., USA and Japan. Leaders of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal started the Engineering College in Jadavpur in 1907. In fact, the Madras Provincial government in 1906 decided to start a department of industries. The Secretary of State, Lord Morley, directed the provincial government to withdraw the scheme. In 1911, Gokhale introduced a Bill for permissive and gradual introduction of free and compulsory primary education through local bodies, which did not receive official support.

From the beginning of this century, the debates on education policy reflect the clash of class interests of the British and the Indian bourgeoisie. While the former, attempted to restrict education, impose controls with a view to stopping students from taking part in politics, the latter saw the advantages of expansion of higher education as strengthening the national movement and for providing the human resources for the development of capitalism in Independent India.

In passing, it must be noted that the British, taking lessons from the Indian experience, were careful not to expand higher education in the other colonies, particularly in Africa.¹⁹

Subsequently, there were many more commissions, the Sadler Commission of 1917, the Hartog Commission of 1929, the Abbot Wood Report of

1936-37 and the Sargent Report of 1944. There was also the Sapru Committee of 1934 appointed by the United Provinces Government to enquire into the causes of unemployment. Its recommendations for the diversification of courses for training technical personnel and the debates reflected the conflict of class interests between the colonial rulers and the Indian bourgeoisie.

The demands of the national movement found a more concrete expression in the demand for education in the mother tongue. This was felt as a necessary element to draw the mass of Indian people into the struggle for freedom. As Gandhi noted, "Among the many evils of foreign rule, the blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by history as one of the greatest. It sapped the energy of the nation—it has estranged them from the masses."²⁰

The tasks in the field of education—free and compulsory education, education in the mother tongue etc.—that remain unsolved till date and which form the basic content of the demands of the democratic section today were, in fact, raised in our country by the national movement and its leaders. These were raised at that time by them as it served their class interests. However, as we have argued in an earlier section and as we shall subsequently discuss, these very demands were abandoned by the ruling classes once they assumed power after independence, once again in their class interest.

Ideological Support to Bourgeois Democracy

Following the transfer of power, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) decided in January 1948 to set up two commissions, one to deal with university education and the other to deal with secondary education, recognising the fact that the requirements of independent India would be different and hence a restructuring of the system was imminent. This decision came at a time when the promises made to the people in the field of education during the freedom struggle were to be implemented. Free and compulsory education, upto the age of 14 was being debated in the Constituent Assembly, which ultimately found expression in the Directive Principles of State Policy. The Scheme that seems to have been worked out was that universal elementary education would be achieved by 1960 and necessary changes in the secondary as well as higher education would have to be made in accordance with the needs of an independent India.

The first of the Commissions to be appointed was the University Education Commission in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan to report on Indian university education and suggest improvement and extensions that may be desirable to suit present and future requirements of the country.

This Commission, which produced a comprehensive and voluminous report, set for itself the task of re-orienting the educational system to face the "great problem, national and social, the acquisition of economic independence, the increase of general prosperity, the attainment of an effective

democracy over riding the distinctions of caste and creed, rich and poor, and a rise in the level of culture. For a quick and effective realisation of these aims, education is a powerful weapon if it is organised efficiently and in public interest. As we claim to be a civilised people, we must regard the higher education of the rising generation as one of our principle concerns."²¹

Implicit in this was the task that was also repeatedly stated by Jawaharlal Nehru, that the achievement of political independence must be transformed into economic independence. Towards this end, there was a need to increase the trained and skilled personnel who will undertake this task. The transformation of political independence into economic independence, in class terms, meant that the progress of capitalist development in India was to be ensured. Economic independence was equated with the increase of general prosperity. Corresponding to these class needs, the essential tasks of the commission were to reorient the educational system towards achieving economic independence and attainment of values to ensure an effective democracy.

Towards this end, the report of the Commission discussed re-orientation of higher education with relation to the five tenets of our constitution—Democracy, Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The idea of the report was to remould the educational system as an ideological support to parliamentary democracy. "We know what Hitler did in 6 years with the German youth. The Russians are clear in their minds about the kind of society for which they are educating and the qualities required in their citizens. Our education system must find its guiding principles in the aims of the social order for which it prepares."²²

On the question of economic independence, the report notes the urgent need of technicians. "there is an urgent need for such occupations and skills all over the country" which "will train a large and growing body of ambitious youth for employment as technicians in various existing industries. they will ensure a continuous flow of skilled workers for several modern industries which are being started. we are strongly of opinion that each province should have larger number of occupational institutes preferably one in each district giving training in as many occupations as possible."²³ These were the main thrust of the recommendations although the commission did touch upon all aspects of higher education in a comprehensive manner and made detailed recommendations for the improvement of university management.

In its conclusion it notes, "many of these proposals will mean increased expenditure, but this increase, we are convinced, is an investment for the democratic future of a free people. With all the earnestness at our command, it solicits the government of India which charged us with this important task and the people of India, to give their very earnest and sympathetic considerations to the financial needs of the universities, and assure them the funds without which no improvement is possible,"²⁴ Notwithstanding this appeal, and the demand of the independent nation that at least 10 per cent of

the budget allocation must be set aside for education, the First Five Year Plan allocated 7.6 per cent only. In fact, the first education minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad lamented that when the first draft of the First Plan was made, education was almost completely ignored. Also, there seemed to be a general view that only those subjects should be taken up which would give quick returns. In his view, education was the basis for the success of every sphere in planning.

Increasing State Control

The report of this commission was submitted in August, 1949. Among other things, the Commission had recommended the setting up of a university grants commission (UGC) which will be an autonomous body organising the governance of universities. When the Education policy resolution came up before the Parliament, the government accepted the proposal of establishing the UGC, but ruled that it shall function under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Meghnad Saha, a member of the Commission bitterly attacked this position in the Rajya Sabha. Hiren Mukherjee (Lok Sabha) on behalf of the undivided CPI endorsed this attack and argued that 75 per cent of higher education was in the colleges and that the UGC should cover the colleges. Necessary amendments to this effect were accepted, but the government was firm on not granting complete autonomy to the UGC. The critics of the Curzon reforms were themselves implementing similar measures.

The intervening period since the submission of the report and the policy resolution, was a period of militant struggles, the most important of these being the glorious Telengana armed struggle. Learning from the experience of the first half of the century and knowing fully well from their own experience, the impetus that the educated sections can give to popular movements, the rulers of independent India recognised the importance of state control over education and put it into practice immediately after assuming power.

Promotion of Technical Education

The development of capitalism required not only products of universities and higher education but technicians and skilled artisans. This urgent need could not be fulfilled by university reforms. As noted earlier, the CAGE had recommended the setting up of a commission to deal with secondary education. This was reinforced by the Secondary Education Commission appointed in September, 1952 with Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar as the Chairman. The report was submitted to the first Parliament in 1953.

Reflecting the needs of the ruling classes, the chapter, titled "Reorientation of aims and objectives" notes that "one of its (India's) most urgent problems—if not the most urgent problem—is to improve productive efficiency to increase the national wealth and thereby to raise appreciably the standard of living of the people."²⁵

Further, it outlines the 'dominant needs'—"training of character of fit students to participate creatively as citizens in the emerging democratic social order, the improvement of their practical and vocational efficiency so that they may play their part in building up the economic prosperity of their country, and the development of their literacy, artistic and cultural interests"²⁶ Needless to add, the thrust of the recommendations refer only to the first two. And of these, it clearly emphasises the second, "side by side with the development of this attitude (new attitude to work-dignity of labour, however 'lowly') there is a need to promote technical skill and efficiency at all stages of education so as to provide trained and efficient personnel to work out schemes of industrial and technological advancement. In the past, our education has been so academic and theoretical and so divorced from practical work that the educated classes have, generally speaking, failed to make enormous contribution to the development of this country's national resources and to add to national wealth. This must now change."²⁷ The report also recommended the setting up of technical schools, polytechnics, strengthening multipurpose education, central technical institutions etc. In fact, the entire infrastructure to produce a large technical manpower.

In conformity with their aspirations for rapid capitalist development, the ruling classes required to draw in the maximum number of young people into this process. This necessitated, in addition to the demands of the national movement, that education be imparted in the mother tongue. Accordingly, the Commission recommended that, "Mother tongue in the regional language should generally be the medium of instruction throughout the secondary school stage. In addition, it suggested the teaching of English and Hindi but at different stages of education."²⁸

With regards to finances, this report, like the Radhakrishnan Commission report, pleaded for sufficient funds for the success of these ambitious plans. It recommended an 'industrial education cess' and suggested that, "a certain percentage of net revenue from nationalised industries or concerns such as Railways, Communications, Posts and Telegraphs etc., should be made available for the promotion of technical education in certain fields."²⁹ These two reports put together sum up the reorientation of the educational system according to the needs of the ruling classes aspiring for the speedy development of capitalism. Following this came the recommendations of increased financial allocations and to make the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. These were subsequently abandoned as the crisis deepened.

Feudal Vestiges

The compromise with feudalism and the sharing of state power with the landlords, rendered the Indian bourgeoisie incapable of eliminating feudal vestiges. Apart from social evils like casteism that continue to persist, this compromise restricted the market for capitalist development in the country. In spite of the heavy public sector investment in the Second Five Year Plan to provide the infrastructural facilities for capitalist development, such a

développement was necessarily constrained by the low level of purchasing power of the mass of the Indian people. Under these conditions, capitalist development could proceed only within the constraints imposed by the level of demand and the only method of maintaining or increasing profits was by imposing greater burdens on the already impoverished masses. This naturally gave rise to crisis and stagnation in Indian industry which found its sharpest expression in the mid-sixties. These objective conditions necessitated a revision of the ambitious plans to reorient the educational system to produce a large number of educated and technical manpower. Instead, a technical manpower capable of manning the greater profit making capital intensive technology was needed. Necessary changes in the educational system had to be undertaken. One of the ways that this found reflection was in the decision to open the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) at the expense of expansion of polytechnics and industrial training institutes (ITIs).

Therefore, while the recommendations of the Commissions were being implemented and a rapid expansion of education took place, (however distant from meeting the requirements of the people) the objective situation called for a halt in this expansion, if not reversal. By the beginning of the 60s, signs of growing educated unemployed were being noticed.

Growing Economic Crisis

In this background, the Education Commission of 1964 was appointed with Dr D S Kothari as Chairman, popularly known as the Kothari Commission. The commission presented (1966) a report which even today remains the most comprehensive one. The report entitled "Education and National Development" in its Foreward noted, "Indian education needs a drastic reconstitution, almost a revolution. Tinkering with the existing situation and moving forward with faulty steps and lack of faith can make things worse than before".

The report was, in fact, the social and political expression of the economic crisis of that period. It contained, on the one hand, recommendations that reflected the democratic aspirations of the Indian people for free and compulsory education, increased financial outlay etc —while on the other hand, it also contained recommendations which would lead to the restriction of higher education.

Regarding the constitutional provision of free and compulsory education, the report suggested that, "all the areas of the country should be able to provide five years of good and effective education to all the children by 1975-76 and seven years of such education by 1985-86"³⁰. Consequently, the educational policy resolution adopted by the Parliament in 1968 stated that the Constitutional directive would be fulfilled by 1980.

The report contained interesting projections. With regard to finances, it noted that on the average, the per capita expenditure of education by 1985-86 should be *at least* Rs 54 per head, at 65-66 price level. It assumed an increase of 10 per cent per annum of expenditure on education again at 64-

65 prices and noted that, "The figure of 6 per cent of GNP invested in education by 1986 may seem to be an ambitious target. We do not quite hold this view" and continued, "By, 1986 it is likely that the figure of 10 per cent of the GNP invested in education will become common in most countries"³¹

The Commission was appointed in 1964, the report was submitted in 1966 and the policy resolution was adopted in 1968. This was the period when the economic crisis found a sharp political expression. The mass discontent against the Congress policies, the rising protests of the student community against the deteriorating situation and employment opportunities, culminated in the rejection of the Congress in several States of the country in the 1967 general elections. The active role of the student community in this process was viewed with great concern by the ruling classes.

The education policy resolution of 1968 had very little to do with the overall recommendations of the Kothari Commission. Only those aspects which suited the ruling classes, the three language formula, the centres of excellence, governance of universities etc., were incorporated. In fact, with relation to governance, the Government found the Kothari Commission lacking in many respects and appointed the Gajendra Gadkar Commission in 1969. The recommendations of this commission regarding the appointment of the VCs, structure and composition of the senates etc., which gave the State a greater control over the administration of Higher Education corresponded to the ruling class interests and was, therefore, implemented.

Cut in Educational Outlay

While the Kothari Commission report was released, the Government was discussing the Fourth Five Year Plan. Notwithstanding the Commission's recommendations, the Fourth Plan reduced the allocation for education from 7.86 per cent in the First Plan to 5.16 per cent, the actual expenditure being 4.94 per cent.

As the crisis deepened, expenditure on education was reduced. The ruling classes no longer required the expansion of education for its capitalist development. They, in fact, were unable to utilise the educated manpower already being produced. Curtailing expenditure on education in effect meant the nullification of some of the recommendations of the Kothari Commission that were democratic. On the other hand, those recommendations that served the ruling classes were accepted and sought to be implemented. Given the objective conditions obtaining at that moment, the Kothari Commission report was destined to be put in a cold storage.

Though the education policy resolution stated that there would be a review every five years, no such review was done. The ruling classes allowed the education system to continue to exist as before except for the important fact of controlling the student and university community through repressive measures. The economic crisis, the rising mass discontent found an expression in stricter control of these institutions. The response of the ruling class to the situation was increasing authoritarianism and education was no

exception. This process culminated with the declaration of Emergency and the consequent large scale repressive measures. One of the major developments of this period was the constitutional amendment during the Emergency removing education from the concurrent List and placing it in the State List.

With the defeat of the Congress(I) in the 1977 elections and the formation of the Janata Government came the draft education policy of 1978. This emphasised, among other things, 'non-formal' education. It gave the Gandhian model as the ideological support to this argument. Non-formal education for the poor and formal education for the rich. With the fall of the Janata Party this education policy, however, never saw the light of the day.

Attacks On Democratic Rights

The return to power of the Congress(I) in 1980 and the deepening economic crisis expressed itself in increasing authoritarian attacks on the democratic rights of the people. This found expression in the field of education also. Commissions were appointed and ordinances promulgated which sought, on the one hand, to curtail the available educational facilities, particularly in the field of higher education and, on the other hand, to abrogate the democratic rights of the university community. The Central Universities Review Committee (CURC) report which was set up by the UGC in 1981 recommended amongst others, freezing of admissions, ban on elections to student's unions, teachers and non-teaching staff associations, codes of conduct prohibiting the expression of democratic dissent, setting up of special courts/tribunals to deal with indiscipline, restructuring of the composition of senates and syndicates, replacing the elected participation of students and other sections by 'consultation'. In July, 1981, the report of the Police Commission was released and in its 56th chapter titled 'Police and Students', recommended the setting up of a statutory Police Protection Force to ensure 'discipline' in the campuses, on the lines of the notorious Industrial Security Force. Apart from giving complete licence to the police to enter educational institutions whenever they please, the Commission, in fact, endorsed the establishment of police camps in various campuses. On October 21 the same year, at a meeting of the seven Vice Chancellors of Central universities convened by the UGC, a decision was taken to set up a committee of Vice Chancellors to consider these recommendations.

Apart from the ordinances in various universities essentially reflecting the above recommendations, the Viswa Bharati (Amendment) Bill was enacted in 1984. This drastically reorganised the composition of the senate and reflected the other recommendations of the CURC. This period, therefore, was one where the needs of the ruling classes—curtailing higher education since there was the reserve of educated personnel who could not be absorbed and curbing the protests and growing opposition to its policies in the universities—found expression in various steps taken in the field of education.

The deepening economic crisis necessitated changes in the contemporary needs of the ruling classes. As we argued above, the ruling classes themselves abandoned their earlier positions in accordance to these needs. This is clearly reflected in the furious debate that took place over the West Bengal Left Front Government's educational reforms. The central government and the ideologues of the ruling classes launched a vicious tirade against the Left Front Government on the issue of education in the mother tongue and changes in the primary school syllabus. What the Left Front Government is implementing is in fact precisely what the Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar Commission had recommended in 1953, and accepted by the central government then. The attack on the Left Front Government's educational policy is also an expression of ruling class interests. When the contending classes in society take up the issues which the ruling classes have abandoned, these are attacked. The debate over the Left Front Government's education policy today is an expression of the class struggle in our country.

The deepening economic crisis also meant increased dependence of the Indian ruling classes on imperialism. The conditionalities of the IMF loan clearly stipulate the reduction of expenditure on public services including education. This has reinforced the growing attempts of the ruling classes to reduce expenditure on education and conforming to their contemporary needs. This is reflected in the fact that the outlay for education was reduced from 7.86 per cent in the First Plan to 5.83 in the Second to 4.9 per cent in the Fourth to 3.3 per cent in the Fifth, 2.2 per cent in the Sixth. The Seventh Plan has allocated a mere 2.5 per cent of the public sector outlay for education at current prices. As we have noted earlier, the Kothari Commission had projected a 'modest' per capita expenditure on education for 1985-86 as Rs. 54 per capita at 1965-66 prices level. On the basis of the figures available in this year's budget, this per capita expenditure at 1965-66 price level works out to a mere Rs. 3.10 per capita.

The developments since 1980 had still to be formalised in the form of a new policy. In fact, after considerable consultations in 1983, Indira Gandhi's Government prepared a draft that was circulated amongst exclusive sections in 1984. During the last few months of Mrs. Gandhi's tenure, a draft education policy was prepared. This draft contained most of the recommendations that are contained in the present document. The Rajiv Government only speeded up the process of formalising this policy.

Curtailing educational opportunities, increasing Governmental control and repressive measures and, above all, the reduction in expenditure is the immediate backdrop to the recently proposed changes in the field of education—changes which will take India to the 21st century, leading the world of illiterates.

- 1 Yechury, Sitaram, "Class Basis of Education Policy" in *The Marxist*, Vol. 3, No. 3-4 July-December, 1985.
- 2 F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1977.
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KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY*

The Compelling Crisis and the New Education Policy

THE WELL-KNOWN triangle of quantity, quality, and equity in the Indian education system is more elusive today than when the National Education Policy was adopted in 1968. The state's perception of the required *quality* of education has undergone some change. More because the composition of the demand for skills has changed visibly since the mid-seventies. At the level of *quantity*, the determinants of the state's real policy are placed in a more disturbing configuration of choices and compulsions. Disturbing because, it is widely recognised that the economy must now operate with a greater bias in favour of widening disparities in income, and the poor man's access to educational opportunities must shrink at a faster pace. What is worse, the state finds it virtually impossible today to finance secondary or higher education even of the children belonging to the third and fourth deciles in the income distribution ladder. *Equity*, therefore, has to bear the heaviest burden of rhetoric when it comes to stating the policy or its perspective. The gap between the stated policy and its implementation must, consequently increase.

No wonder then that the authors of *Challenge of Education* have avoided examining how and why this gap has been widening. The credibility of the document could have been increased if it had included the scrutiny of the consistent failure of the state to implement what has been repeatedly paraded as its 'preferred' targets.

Take the relationship between the demand for skilled manpower and its supply by the formal system of education. The Education Commission (1964-66) had projected manpower requirements on the basis of the Planning Commission's estimates. A 6.5 per cent output growth rate was envisaged as the average of the 'perspective period', and the Education Commission assumed that the projected industrial growth rate of 12 per cent would generate an identical rate of growth in the demand for educated manpower from the industrial sector. The required enrolment in higher education was consequently estimated at 2.2 million in 1975/76 and 4.2 million in 1985/86.¹

The projections went all wrong. In 1981, graduate unemployment, measured by registrations with employment exchanges, was 18.7 per cent of the total educated unemployed (matriculation and above). That was despite a negative growth in enrolment in higher education for some time after 1974 and again after 1977/78. In the academic year 1980/81, enrolment in higher

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education was 2.75 million (and apparently not more than 3.1 million in 1985/86) as compared to 3.17 million in 1973/74. That yields a negative growth rate for the last 12-year period.

Taking professional education separately, the requirement for doctors was estimated at one for every 3000 persons in 1975/76 (compared to one for every 5000 persons in 1966) and one for every 2000 persons in 1985. But admission to medical colleges went down to 11532 in 1980/81 from 13726 in 1973/74. Enrolment in engineering and technology colleges decreased from 2.12 lakh in 1978/79 to 1.03 lakh in 1983, and then went up to only 1.12 lakh in 1983. Unemployment among engineering graduates on the other hand, has been on the increase. Their share among all graduate-unemployed went up from less than 5 per cent in 1972/73 to about 6 per cent in 1977/78, according to the NSS data. Figures for the subsequent period must have been available to the authors of *Challenge of Education*.

Graduates with general education do constitute the highest proportion of the graduate unemployed, no doubt, the question however is, what relative roles have been played by the employment market, private cost of technical/professional education, and the restricted access to the institutions of professional education, in determining the share of general education in aggregate enrolment in higher education? It is common knowledge that more and more students have been knocking at the doors of professional institutions for admission. It does not require extraordinary wisdom to understand that the supply side of enrolment has been determined mainly by the deceleration in the growth of real public expenditure on professional education.

Universal Elementary Education

Universal elementary education is a never-ending refrain in every official document on education and the *Challenge of Education* is no exception to this. What is the performance record? The fifth plan document promised universal primary education for the 6-11 age group by 1975/76, and universal elementary education for the age-group 11-14 by 1980/81. This was "a basic programme of higher priority" and had a claim to "great attention and very large proportion of available funds". So, enrolment in primary schools was to go up to 86.2 million in 1975/76 and that in the middle schools (classes VI to VIII) to 45 million in 1980/81. Given the scarcity of resources, fulltime education was to be combined with part-time education, and the average additional enrolment in all the 8 classes was targetted at 43 lakhs per year, as against the recorded achievement of 25 lakhs prior to the Fifth Plan period.

The Sixth Plan document said that "universalisation of the primary stage of education would imply additional enrolment of about 170 lakh children in classes I to V over the next five years or an average annual rate of enrolment of 34 lakh children". The recorded achievement in additional enrolment, during the Fifth Plan period was estimated at just 20 lakhs per year. The authors of *Challenge* are aware that the rate of growth of enrolment for 1971-81 was

smaller than the age-specific population growth rate. But the explanation offered is quite interesting. The document says that "additional enrolment at the primary education level has now to come from (the) social strata which is not in a position to take advantage of expanding educational opportunities, indicated, among other things, by the deceleration in the growth of enrolment. Thus, with the slowing down of additional enrolment it seems that the first phase of educational expansion during the post-independence era has come to an end."

Who are these beneficiaries? If they are the ones identified as 'below the poverty level', then according to official figures, their proportion at the beginning or in the second year of the eighties should not be less than 55 per cent. Do they perceive education up to class V as enough 'advantage' or should this be up to class VIII, or should it indeed be assumed that they would prefer education at least up to the secondary/higher secondary level?

Enrolment figures can be reasonably depended upon to test this hypothesis. Over-age population (that is, those above the class-specific age in a particular class, say those above 6 plus in class I) account for not less than 10 per cent in class I while spurious enrolment may account for at least another 33 per cent. Enrolment in class I is roughly about one-fourth of the total enrolment in classes I to VIII. For the elementary stage as a whole, therefore, the ministry's figures should be reduced by at least 10 per cent. The corrected enrolment figure in 1980/81 would then be 100.8 million instead of 112 million as claimed by the Planning Commission.² In 1980/81, then, enrolment in class V was about 54 per cent of the total 11-year-old population. And those enrolled in class XI were less than 24 per cent of all 17-year-old population. At this participation rate, not more than 24 per cent households were able to send their children up to Class XI. And not more than 33 per cent could send their children up to class VIII.

Even if one has to make a highly oversimplified assumption that the level of education is strictly a function only of household income, (and therefore, the higher the level achieved, the higher the income of the student's parents) the conclusion in *Challenge* is quite dubious. It implies, among others, that when the gross enrolment ratio for the secondary, higher secondary level fluctuates between 21 and 24, the "first phase of educational expansion" has come to an end—a not-so-bad second-best solution.¹ Besides, there is a spurious suggestion in it that all but the population below the poverty level, or at least all but the bottom 40 to 50 per cent, have already become beneficiaries of expanding education, and have thereby reached a level that is good enough for continuing with the benefit. A simple quantification, on the other hand, shows that literacy, if it means education up to class VIII (that is what *Challenge* also accepts) was and continues to be the privilege of just about 33 per cent of households in India.

Overestimating the achievement can well lead to wrong prescription. The emphasis in *Challenge* on private expenditure as the major source of

finance for further expansion seems to have been influenced by such understanding. For, once the beneficiaries look proportionately large, one can argue that the beneficiaries should now be asked to pay wholly or largely for the education of their children, while those left-out, say the bottom 40 per cent, should be supported by the state, through an expansion of elementary education and scholarships for the rest of the sectors.

Actually, however, that pious idea has not been pursued as the suggested reform. The document *Perspective of Policy Formulation* which projects the likely population in classes I to VIII in 1990, shows that if the population growth rate is 1.5 per cent (itself a questionable assumption), the estimated population in the age-group 6-14 would be 174 million. To ensure that "universal elementary education is achieved by 1990", this number will have to be sent up to class VIII, and the corresponding numbers in several earlier years will have to be retained in their respective classes.

That calls for a hundred per cent retention rate of those who join class I in 1983, and of all the class I batches joining between 1984 and 1990. In other words, the entire class VIII batch of 1990, which joined class I in 1983, or the class VII batch which joined in 1984, must be in the respective classes in the target year, and nobody must drop out during the interim period. For that, enrolment has to grow at an accelerated rate from 1983, and the average growth rate during 1984/85 and 1990/91 has to be 7.6 per cent.

The achievement during the preceding six years has been 4.3 per cent. And the Planning Commission has put the target growth rate during the Seventh Plan period at 4.1 per cent, though it too, has kept "achievement of universal elementary education" as virtually its first priority. *Challenge* suggests "hard financial decisions" for the implementation of universal elementary education, or "alternatively other educational approaches such as non-formal/distance education, and vocationalisation". The Planning Commission chooses the alternative, and avoids the hard decision—including a big rise in public expenditure on education—since, "Increasing enrolment in full-time elementary schools beyond this level of 137 million in classes I to VIII (in 1990) might not be feasible due to socio-economic reasons and other factors".¹ Obviously then, these reasons, reasons that are inherent in the path of development, cannot be tackled by the planners or framers of the policy perspective.

What happens then, to the Planning Commission's second objective, the "eradication of illiteracy in the age-group 15-35 years"?² At 2 per cent growth rate, the population in the age-group 15-19 (that is the group which could reach class VIII during 1985-90) would be about 66 million, and about 250 million in the age-group 15-35. Assuming even a one-per-cent fall in the drop-out rate, at the Planning Commission's projected rate of growth in enrolment, not more than 33 million will become literate by education up to class VIII. So, half of those aged 15 to 19, the new entrants to the world of youth, will either remain illiterate or have only a "smattering of literacy". How much the non-formal education system or "distance" education can help in actually delivering the goods is only a matter of conjecture. Even the

Planning Commission has not offered any estimate so far

Search for Quality

Improvement in the quality of education can, then, relate only to those who are actually participating in the system of education. Then comes the question: what quality for whom at which level in the formal system? *Challenge* has no understandable or consistent answer to that question. Certainly "It is difficult to define quality", but talking about it can mean little unless at least some idea is formed about what it should mean to the individual concerned and the society at the given stage of development. A number of attributes have been listed in the document: "A quality conscious system would produce people who have the attributes of functional and social relevance, mental agility and physical dexterity, efficacy and reliability, and, above all, the confidence and experiment with new situations. To these personal attributes, one could add the dimensions of a value system conducive to harmony, integration and welfare of the weak and the disadvantaged."

Who again are these people? Those who have received higher education, or those who have done only up to the higher secondary level, (including those having obtained vocational education)? That they do not include those who have got only elementary education, is clear from the observation that "The role of elementary education, is to fulfil, "the basic objective of nurturing national pride and integration and cultural cohesion, and internalization of democratic values". When it comes to secondary education, what has been sought as the optimum, is "competence in mathematics and science" (since that "is likely to be crucial to everyone in the coming decades") and "enforcement of discipline, acceptance of duties set forth in Part IV of the Constitution, and a minimal capacity for innovation, articulation and participation in production."

As regards higher education, there is nothing in the document to indicate what role is expected from the desired improvement in quality, though observations interspersed in the document embody some implications. About the education system as a whole, it has been said that "The system is expected to generate new knowledge in all fields within the reach of the human mind. In addition, it has to evolve principles, methodologies and guidelines for the application of knowledge for benefitting the society. It is also expected to provide knowledge and skills for the problems of development."

Application of knowledge is possible only when there is a perceived necessity of such application. And new knowledge is acquired only within a framework of interaction between the exact content of that knowledge and its social use over a period of time. So, one cannot keep one's eyes closed to the levels of the productive forces and the structure of their use that together determine the necessity for the acquisition of knowledge and its application. The document recognises that "The linkage of technical education with manpower planning has remained weak although this is one area where the need

for strong linkages is obvious" It also refers to the feeling that "The products of IITs are geared more to the requirements of the international technology market rather than to India's own needs for development" But there it stops

What have the products of the vocational stream at the secondary level achieved? If their technical/professional education was supposed to be in tune with the growth in demand for the related skills, then why have these diploma holders remained largely employed? Here too, *Challenge* refers to "the failure of vocational stream" as "the result of poor linkages between it and industry or opportunities for self-employment" If the vocational stream offers, as the document says, "neither a reasonable chance of worthwhile employment nor any advantage in moving upwards into a professional or general programme of education", then what qualitative improvement can ever be visualised? Besides, what precisely is the quality that is or should be, expected? The IITs were established for imparting technical instructions of a higher level than at the Regional Engineering Colleges Today, about two lakh take the Joint Entrance Examination every year for 8000 seats in the IITs If the state (including the public sector) and big business together cannot absorb this small number, then attention should be paid first to what has been happening to "India's own needs for development"

Surprisingly, the delinking of degrees from jobs is being viewed as a panacea, despite this experience *Challenge* visualises "considerable relief from the pressure of numbers in the undergraduate stream in case avenues for training with a reasonable assurance of getting jobs are provided on a large scale in close collaboration with employers" Training in which skill? Collaboration with which section of employers? If these are jobs like television repair and servicing, operating a mini-computer or its servicing, and the like, then some employment potentiality might be there for a few years to come. But how far can the services sector grow without a corresponding growth in the two major productive sectors?

In fact, vocationalisation appears to have been accepted as a *faith*, and like all other faith, it has come to stand solely on the willingness of the faithful It attains comical heights when general undergraduate courses are sought to be reformed via diversification of a novel kind A student, it is suggested, should "be able to graduate with modules pertaining to political theory, public administration, mathematics and word processing" The targetted or the actual function that such a module will perform has not been explained Perhaps the idea is that if the graduate cannot get any other job, even that of a mathematics teacher in a middle school, he should be able to apply for the job of a word processor operator His study of political theory should then be for a purpose other than the one for study of mathematics And his study of either of the two can have nothing to do with his vocational training as a word processor operator Unless, of course, the non-vocational part is for general awareness

Science education is inadequate for a variety of reasons, of which the for-

mal curricula is only one. It is widely recognised that science courses at the secondary/higher secondary level are based on the conventional compartmentalisation between physics, chemistry, and biology. As a result, scientific consciousness is seriously constricted at the relevant age of the student. The student's study of environment in his biology course, for example, remains isolated from the chemistry of environment or from the elementaries of physics. Scientific thinking including the essential perception of inter-relationships between various processes in the world of matter and the social relations, becomes the first casualty. Similarly, motion is discussed with the help of calculus at a stage when the student's course in mathematics does not require learning of calculus. The student remains oblivious of the understanding that calculus is best understood in its real-life application through the study of motion.

At the college and university levels, courses are designed "essentially to explain concepts and basic principles at various levels of abstraction". Lack of equipments and materials or an adverse student-teacher ratio is certainly the immediate reason. Universities and advanced study centres in science have nearly accomplished a division of labour between abstract conceptualisation and applied research. It is the state's science policy and policy of allocation to higher levels of science education that lie at its root. That, in turn, is determined by the structure of technology in use at any time, and the one that comes to be preferred for the foreseeable future. And it is here that the entire range of issues beginning from investment-mix or demand composition to the composition of products or income distribution, enters the scene in a big way. "India's own needs for development" cannot be understood in isolation from this wide set of interconnections.

What, therefore, strikes one as increasing unemployment—with or without its relationship with the 'quality' of science education—among science and technology graduates, is the product of the lack of relevance in more senses than one. Ultimately, it is a question of relevance to the economy, its process of production and exchange, and thereby to those who dominate the structure of control over the means of production. Such a framework of relations, at its more generalised level, is the framework of *class* relations. In its generalised form, it may appear as an oversimplification,—mechanistic and 'deterministic' to the complacent liberal—but, the specificities of such relations can be identified in everyday experience, as also in empirical investigation. In essence, therefore, it is the class relations which determine the *required* quality of science and technology education, as also the creation of conditions for the achievement of that required quality.

How far can the question of quantitative expansion of education be isolated from these conditions? To put it somewhat naively, higher education for a tiny minority, based on the principle of 'merit', without any equality of opportunities, is necessarily adverse to the achievement of the optimum quality that the society is capable of producing. Enrolment becomes subjected to selection and elimination at two levels—one within the economic and social, mainly economic relations, and another the formal sys-

tem of education. The clearest manifestation of the former is the high incidence of child labour when it pulls down the retention rate at the elementary stage of education. At the secondary level, retention becomes a function mainly of the household's cost of education relative to its income, and the physical access to the school. Performance in terms of learning is determined by a number of factors. Important among them are the level of nutrition of the student, availability of books, etc, the family environment as an input to learning incentive, and the student's recognition of where and how he can apply what he has learnt. Within the formal system, resources, school environment, the quality of teaching and the examination system are the main factors.

Merit, then is not absolutely determined at the level of genetics. In a class society, it has a generalised correlation with the hierarchy of class relations, and a specified relationship with the occupation pattern and the structure of income distribution. The performance of a poor student is often less meritorious and therefore, he is shut out from the merit-based formal system. At the stage where he ends his formal education, he receives a less useful division, and thereafter he becomes one of the "less equals" in the competition for employment. It was an American professor who said about public schools in the early sixties, that "in the schools of modern America we still find that children from 'comfortless cabins', or to shift time and locale, from 'urban slums' cannot compete with the children of the elite. This is true not necessarily because of any deficiency of talent or ability but because society being dominated by elites has given their children a head start and, following the lead as always, the schools have compounded the advantage by providing them with superior educational services of every conceivable variety".⁵ About the other haven of capitalism, England, Martin Mayer says that selection by social class leads to differentiation between two types of high schools: one "where two-thirds or more of the kids are college-bound", and another, in "wretched slums, where no more than a handful of kids have even considered the possibility of college education, and the academic options are severely restricted".⁶

Coming to higher education,—and one has to underline here that not more than 4.5 per cent of the age-specific population has ever reached a college or a university department—the same set of factors continue to operate in determining retention and performance. But, a substantial proportion of students who could have made the best use of the highest level of available educational resources, (if the society and the educational system had given them the necessary opportunity) have not reached this level at all.⁷ Those who arrive, are obviously not equals. And the formal system introduces the widest variety of differences among them. The higher the market price of a specialisation, the greater the role of 'merit' in selection and elimination. And the 'status' of an institution or a subject is ultimately influenced by that market price. Allocation of resources, too, follows the same criterion. The wide variation in expenditure per student in different disciplines, institutions, and types of institutions by level (under-graduated

and post-graduate, a college in a city and one in a small town or the like), is more due to this than the differences in the cost of necessary resources

When a trend in the price of a particular specialisation/skill changes, even reversed, in the short run, the consequent change in the enrolment pattern becomes a further constraint on the pursuit of quality. A higher secondary science student, for example, seeks admission to undergraduate commerce course, not because he loves the subject but because the Banking Services Recruitment Board or business houses can recruit more men and with a higher salary than what the CSIR, the industry, or the educational institutions have to offer to science graduates. Again, what pursuit of quality is being inspired, when an IIT graduate knows that he may have to sit for the IAS examination and, if successful, spend a good part of his working life as a Block Development Officer or the like?

Reform of education with improvement of quality, therefore, is not just a matter of changing the nuts and bolts within the formal system of education. In any case, the first need is to ensure increasing reconciliation between quantitative expansion and upgrading of the content of education. For the latter, of course, the perception of the necessity for a changed quality, by the state and the classes which control state power, is essential. A system of education that is free from any irrelevance of its products, can only be one which is simultaneously *democratic* in terms of availability of opportunities, and *scientific* in terms of the skill knowledge it imparts and the consciousness it inculcates.⁸

The Desperate Recipe

Challenge cannot see that. It can see, on the other hand, that a thousand million people of India, "will be committed to the noble principles enshrined in our Constitution, with the goal of equality of status and of opportunity providing a major thrust for action." When it says that "There is in the country a new confidence and a new enthusiasm", it obviously refers to the new enthusiasm for 'liberalising' the economy towards a closer collaboration with international monopoly capital, via faster import of technology for a further change in the composition of products in tune with, or to strengthen, the present disparities in income. All that can go well with 'information and communication revolution', and the expedition to the '21st century', but cannot reform education in the interests of the people.

On the contrary, a crude and a more exploitative concept of productivity has come to dominate the state's allocation priorities. Leave alone any real increase in state expenditure on education, even the present ratio—to total public expenditure or to GNP—is hardly adequate. The reasons for this are not unfathomable. Upto the third plan, the necessary level of technical knowledge and its application was more clearly visible, particularly due to the choice of the technology-mix of that period and the state's emphasis on self-reliance in technical know-how. Expansion of education too was deemed necessary. Partly because of the peoples' aspirations raised during the national movement, and equally, if not more, because of the

requirements of the production process including those for the expansion of the state apparatus. The next two decades saw a deceleration in the growth of education, and a consequent adjustment in the pattern of allocation on education. The 'wasteful' nature of public expenditure on education came under increasing attention in some academic cost-benefit analyses, and uniformly in official pronouncements. The search for quality became increasingly limited and burdened by undefinable goals when it came to official propaganda. The "large numbers" became the villain of the piece.

Then came the 'new' economic policy of liberalisation. At the production end, it envisages import-based renovation of technology, and a product-mix that is more pragmatic by its marketability in a limited domestic and a more limited international market. The creation or application of new knowledge within the country is of little relevance to such a structure.

At one end, in terms of its distributive implications it has to rely on an allocation policy which keeps public expenditure within 'safe' limits. The emphasis on privatisation arises out of this compulsion. "Human resources" or "human capital formation" has to be left to the whims of the market. Not by income-based multiple-pricing of education, but by further differentiating education in terms of its demand in the employment market.

Its ultimate effect has to be more adverse for the poorer sections and the middle income groups. Contraction of educational opportunities is the necessary consequence. In terms of enrolment, it can only mean (a) lower growth rate in all the three sectors of formal education, (b) drastic cut in expenditure per student in secondary and higher education, (c) more rigorous application of the 'merit' principle in the institutions of higher education, and (d) further concentration of higher education, (mainly by drastically raising the private cost of education).

But faced with a compelling demystification, ideology does not give up the effort to hide its real character. It has to, therefore, try to appear value-free by putting on a technocratic apparel. Administrative restructuring must be emphasised as more important. Non-issues or fringe issues have to be posed as the major problems. Symptoms have been identified as the disease. Campus casteism, student unrest, 'politics' in the campus in general, and "lack of discipline" among teachers, have become the crucial targets of reform. The remedy suggested, is of course, not without a method. A committee of the University Grants Commission (UGC) suggests concentration of powers of appointment in the central universities in the hands of the UGC itself, and the rest of the powers in the Vice-Chancellor. *Challenge* goes all out to suggest eradication of 'politics' from the campus, and of whatever little participation teachers make today in the organisation of education in some universities. Delinking undergraduate education completely from the university structure, and bringing it under an autonomous board (like the Board of Secondary Education) is another recipe suggested. Elsewhere, it suggests decentralisation to encourage private enterprise in education. Not, of course, a democratic decentralisation, but a structure where the education system remains accountable to the local 'community'. The 'community' apparently

means those who pay as entrepreneurs of education

Whether the correlation of class forces will permit all the reform that has been suggested, is however, an important question. The democratic aspirations for education cannot be wholly suppressed without paying its political cost. Whether the ruling party or the ruling classes can afford, or are willing, to pay that cost is a big question. But the preferences are evident, as are the many compulsions created by the 'new' economic policy. That exactly, is the crux of the crisis in which the ruling classes have been caught. The crisis in the education system is best understood in this background. The challenge is not just 'of education'. The root lies elsewhere.

- 1 Sources of figures cited under *Universal Elementary Education* have been cited in the text, unless otherwise mentioned. References or extracts from *Challenge of Education*, Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1985, are from the first mimeographed version and not from the printed one. Page numbers have not been mentioned since those do not appear necessary.
- 2 *Seventh Five Year Plan, 1985-90*, Vol II, Planning Commission, New Delhi.
- 3 *Ibid*
- 4 "Whether we choose to call it pure or applied, the story of science is not something apart from the common life of mankind. What we call pure science only thrives when the contemporary social structure is capable of making full use of its teaching, furnishing it with new problems for solution and equipping it with new instruments for solving them." Lancelot Hogben, *Science for the Citizen*, (Fourth Edition), 1966, p. 11.
- 5 Kenneth B. Clark in Patricia Sexton, *Education and Income Inequalities of Opportunities in Our Public Schools*, 1961, p. ix.
- 6 *The Schools*, 1961, p. 304.
- 7 Of every 100 children born in say, 1961, 80 joined class I in 1967. Of them, 39 went up to class VIII in 1974, 24 went up to class XI in 1977, and only 4 went up to the university level thereafter.
- 8 As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to separate the scientific part of the consciousness from the democratic part, if one takes 'democratic' to mean in the interest of the people, in non-class terms.

K.K. THECKEDATH *

Challenge of Education—An Exercise in Evasion

SO FAR AS pronouncements on education are concerned, the Constitution of India, the Kothari Commission recommendations and the present document, "The Challenge of Education", represent three stages in the developing crisis in the Indian economy. With the coming of independence and the opening of the Indian markets there was optimism of growth and development, and hence the Constitution laid down the articles on education up to the age of fourteen and the protection of youth and tender childhood from exploitation.

The specific conditions created by the rulers in the country, where land concentration remained and the overwhelming majority of the rural people were steeped in poverty, naturally acted as a break on the expansion of the market. The signs of the post independence crisis in the form of underutilisation of capacity and growing unemployment of people gave its colour to the picture painted by the Kothari Commission. The Kothari Commission gave the first signal for reduction of education, for siphoning off of young people at the stage of Xth standard, for streamlining of education, for reducing the degree courses from a four-year programme to a three-year programme.

Now, with the further deepening of the crisis with registered unemployment touching the all time high of 30 million, *The Challenge of Education* is visualised in an open refusal to implement the constitutional directive on education.

I would add to these prefatory remarks the observation that the present document fails to make any clear statement about the line to be adopted on most matters but merely throws up suggestions which may be interpreted one way or another. It is on such slippery ground that we have to find our way and understand what is in the minds of the rulers. Euphemistically, it has been described as an open ended document.

Plea for Giving up the Constitutional Obligation

I combed the document with a microscope but failed to find anywhere any statement of the constitutional obligation. Though, Article 45 is mentioned and words like universalisation of elementary education, accessibility,

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etc., are used, the document carefully avoids stating the actual constitutional commitment. This is certainly no casual omission, it is part of a design to make people forget that in 1950 certain guarantees were given, so that the rulers are now able to slip out of constitutional obligations.

What does Article 45 say? I quote this short statement:

"45 The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

Again Article 39 states in section (e)

"that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or their strength,"

These were not phrases and passages included in the Constitution to embellish it, but were expressions of the aspirations of the people who laid down their lives for freedom. The importance of education in the eyes of our people is seen from that fact that of all the directive principles, Article 45 is the only one which stipulates a time limit of ten years for its implementation.

The major thrust of the Article is contained in the words *free* and *compulsory*, for *all children*, until they *complete the age of fourteen*. It is precisely these commitments that the present authors want to sweep under the carpet. In the entire document there is no reference at all to *compulsory education*, and the document dishonestly hides the commitment of education until children complete the age of fourteen, by referring to universalisation, elementary education, primary and middle education, various patterns obtaining in the country with elementary education taking up 4+3 years, etc. The idea is to dilute the content of Article 45, to replace compulsory education by universal education through various patterns where the input would be reduced to education up to the age of 12 or 13 (five years plus 4 plus 3).

Fate of Elementary Education

Section after section of the document lists the shortfalls in the government's attempts to 'universalise' education. The drop-out rate of 77 per cent between Class I and Class VIII is admitted, as also is admitted the fact that even enrolment at Class I is far from total. It is admitted that in several regions the enrolment of girls is less than 20 per cent. It is also admitted that the per student expenditure on primary education has declined in real terms over the years. But what is the remedy? Is there a promise that this would be rectified, that more investment will take place in education?

The document states that educational planning can only take place within the tight constraints of resources. They further warn us that while deciding the issues, "alternative scenarios have to be considered in the light of constraints not only of financial resources but also the political (sic), social, cultural and organizational milieu."

So what do these constraints dictate for elementary education? This is what they argue

"Assuming that universal elementary education is achieved by 1990 out of a total age-specific population of 17.4 crores, 11 crores pupils should be at the primary stage and the remaining 6.4 crores in the middle stage. It may be noted that this achievement implies that primary education will be 1.5 times and middle education will be 3.2 times its present size. Such an expansion will have a significant impact on the educational expenditure as well. It is estimated that in terms of 1980-81 prices, and assuming the per unit costs of 1977-78 to stay put, the budgetary requirements for the year 1990-91 will be doubled to Rs. 3200 crores (the 1980-81 expenditure being Rs. 1537 crores). On the basis of 8 per cent per annum rate of inflation the budget in current prices would be more than four times the 1980-81 allocations. In 1981, the number of teachers engaged in elementary education was 21.7 lakhs. At the existing pattern of educational development, their number will be 29 lakhs by 1990. However, if universalisation of elementary education is achieved by 1990, the total requirement of teachers for elementary education would increase to 44 lakhs."

It is admitted that universalisation of elementary education would mean increased enrolment in schools and colleges. If we remember the projections of the Fifth Five Year Plan, it was expected that enrolment in higher education would go to 45 lakhs by 1985. The present enrolment figures are only 31 lakhs. Universalisation of elementary education would mean that the projection of 1966 would prove to be correct.

But this is exactly what the rulers do not want and cannot digest. This elaborate argument is wound up with the statement that because of the multiplier effect on enrolments in the schools and colleges and the increased budget, "*policy deliberation vis-a-vis universalisation of elementary education need to be matched with hard financial decisions*"

Simply put, it means if you implement the commitment in the Constitution of getting all the children into the schools, it would also imply that more children would come to schools and colleges which also the rulers cannot bear. Never before have arguments been placed so shamelessly for evading constitutional obligations. The document *The Challenge of Education* is an exercise in evasion, befuddling and obfuscation.

The way our suggested is through *angan wadis*. As the word *angan* signifies, we are supposed to give up even the plea for school buildings. It is admitted that as many as 89 per cent of primary schools, 70 per cent of middle schools, 27 per cent of secondary schools and 10 per cent of higher secondary schools in rural areas do not have urinal/lavatory facilities. The framers of this document try to remedy this situation by the *angan wadis* where there are also no buildings. The *angans* are used for keeping children together to be tended by older children. At one stroke they not only solve the problem of schools without facilities, they also solve the problem of appointing qualified teachers and paying them proper scales. Older girls who have to look after

their siblings in any case would now act as managers of these *angan wadis*

What is the proportion of children to be covered by this non-formal set up? The staggering figure of 3.9 crores of children are expected to go through non-formal education in the next decade, which means these are the children who will not be in a position to go through regular schools.

Constitutional Promise

The question we should consider seriously is whether the rulers should be given an alibi for jettisoning the directive principle. Historically, the majority of the intellectuals have played the role of legitimisers of the existing systems, first of the British rule and then of the capitalist-landlord rule. The tragedy is that the intellectuals internalise the system so much that they believe that the crisis of the rulers is to act as parameters restricting their own thinking.

The time has come for us to say that we shall not allow the rulers to give up the commitment of free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen. If this implies a budgetary allocation of Rs 6000 crores, then that amount has to be found. Political and other constraints of the rulers should not be allowed as an excuse for giving up this commitment and replacing it by the new proposals.

In fact, to make compulsory education a reality in our country where 50 per cent of the people are below the poverty line, it should be ensured that two meals are provided in every rural elementary school every working day, once when the school starts in the morning and once at the close of school. Mothers will force their children to attend school at least for the meals that are ensured. The cost for this arrangement would work out to less than Rs 4000 crores in the yearly budget. But the result of investing this amount would be that the base of elementary education would be immediately enlarged.

Thus a total input of Rs 10,000 crores has to be made. The present Rs 1,537 crores had been universally admitted as grossly inadequate. Even the Kothari Commission had recommended an input of 6 per cent of the GNP in education. The teachers' movement in the country has been demanding an allocation of 10 per cent for education.

The document makes fun of the mid-day meals programmes of some state governments and says that they have failed to deliver the goods. In fact there is a powerful lobby in the press which is also denigrating serious attempts to increase the welfare of the people and they are describing these as populist measures. They are only echoing the fears of the rulers who do not want people to crystallise clear and rational demands. But today even to ask for the implementation of the constitutional promises are made out to be irrational. What needs to be done is that the programmes of mid-day meals, free uniforms, etc., of the state governments are strengthened by converting them into two meals programmes to ensure that all children are covered in the educational process.

All Round Curtailment Visualised

The siphoning off process which was started in 1968 by the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern, now will be further intensified by the proposal to have students come out at the VIII Standard level. The experience of the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern is that while students were expected to branch off at the X Standard level into vocational courses, there were no provisions for vocational education. There were admittedly only 550 institutes for nine states in the country, and there were only 134 polytechnics for twenty states in the country.

In spite of this dismal record of vocationalisation, like the Bourbons who never forget anything and never learn anything, the rulers are once again talking of vocationalisation at VIII stage. But there is a method in the madness. For, if the only purpose is to siphon off young people, whether there are alternative avenues for education or not is not a serious problem. For the teachers and for all concerned with education, this means a grave threat to the continuing of even the minimum educational facilities available.

A New Pattern

At the level of higher education also there is a new pattern suggested. The North Eastern Hill University is held up as an example. Instead of the three year degree it is suggested that there should be a two year degree. Let the colleges have an honours course for those students who get 45 per cent marks and above, and even here only those colleges who prove that they are better colleges should have this facility. This means that most of the colleges in the country would close their last year batches, and deal only with the teaching for two year degrees.

Teachers in the state of Maharashtra who are still smarting under the effects of replacing the four year degree by a three year degree will know what such a proposal would mean with regard to the security of jobs of teachers. But what is more important is the attempt to devalue degrees. A specious argument is made that we are producing unemployable graduates. Statistics of unemployed graduates are cited to prove that the graduates that we produce are unemployable. If the Indian doctors and engineers working abroad were to return to our country, they should also be unemployed. Would they immediately become employable? Strange are the arguments of educational planners who sit in the ministries of finance to do their thinking.

Moratorium on Opening of Universities and Colleges

Once we accept that we are producing unemployable graduates, it becomes easy to accept the next proposition that there should be no more new colleges, no more new universities. This is a dangerous argument, and many people are misled by such arguments. Recently there was a meeting of the Education Ministers at Delhi. Surprisingly even the Education Ministers from states like Andhra and Karnataka supported the idea of a moratorium on opening of colleges and universities. The only two state governments which refused to accept this proposition were Tripura and West Bengal.

Let us consider the question of Bombay University. It has reached a state when for proper functioning it has to be divided into at least two universities. A new university in Konkan is long overdue, and there is no reason why the colleges in Goa should not have a separate university to look after them. If the moratorium comes what will happen? The needs of a developing nation dictate the opening of new colleges and new universities. No matter how desperate the rulers may be to turn the clock back and to jettison earlier commitments, we cannot accept the proposition of a moratorium because that would be against the interests of the people.

Capitation Fees and the Elitist Bias

While there is, on the one hand, a drive to devalue all education from the primary to the higher levels by such proposals as *anganwadis* to replace regular schools and two year degrees to replace the three year degrees, there is on the other hand the recognition that centres of better quality education should also be established. The framers of the document realise that everyone cannot be deprived of good standard education, for in that case what will happen to the children of the bureaucrats, the capitalists and the rural rich?

Further, with the economy being geared more and more, under the pressure of the multinationals, to the slogan of producing for export, the rulers see the need for high level sophisticated technology in all spheres of production. The drive towards automation and the introduction of computers is a side result of this linkage of the economy to the foreign market. Import of high level computers and other kinds of automation implies the production of a skilled man power to operate these. Just as Macaulay visualised the need for producing *babus*, the framers of the present document see the need for producing a limited quantity of computer boys.

It is in this background that we should see the emphasis on the pace-setting Doon type schools, one in each district, which will have a computer, and the institutes of excellence to be established on the initiative of private individuals. The elitist bias is clear from the *open justification of capitation fee* in these institutions. The document quotes approvingly a body of opinion "*that these institutions may be allowed to continue provided they would place 25 to 50 per cent of the seats at the disposal of the government for admission on merit without payment of capitation fees*" (para 4.89).

To place 25 to 50 per cent of the seats at the disposal of the government for merit based admission means to keep 50 to 75 per cent of the seats for those who can pay the huge capitation fees. This is reservation of seats for the rich. The whole thrust of capitation institutions is that they in effect reserve the major chunk for the admission to the rural and city rich, and leave a few seats for the vast majority of meritorious children of the poor to compete for. This is elitism in a crude form.

The proposal to delink degrees from jobs is yet another way of reserving jobs for those who can pay. Because once we delink the degree, any pretence of jobs being given to the meritorious will have to be given up. Corruption

will grow further in the appointment of candidates to jobs. The on-money for jobs which we see in many states will become the general pattern for getting any job. The rich will be able to corner the better jobs and the poor will have to find their way into the lower rungs of the job hierarchy.

Privatisation of Education

The task of establishing such centres and institutions is to be given more and more to private agencies. The moratorium on the opening of universities and colleges is to be combined with the provision of privatisation of educational institutions.

What is the record of private institutions in the country? They are commercial centres financed by the government, run for the private gain of a few who own them and run them very often arbitrarily without any accountability either to the government which pays or to society on whose munificent donations they were started in the first place. Take the example of a private college which is at a stone's throw from here.

The total money turnover in this college is around Rs. 46 lakhs per year. The fees collected amounts to Rs. 6 lakhs. The remaining Rs. 40 lakhs comes from the government in the form of grants. What accountability does this institution have? It flouts even simple rules regarding appointment of teachers and continuation of superannuated persons as principals. It does not have any democratic machinery to go into the finances and the handling of money. The institution regularly invites high members of the judiciary for various types of functions and sends them gifts with the sole aim of influencing them on the various matters that are likely to come up in court.

As a minority institution, it has challenged the setting up of even a machinery to go into the grievances of the teachers. The private colleges refuse even to keep their contractual commitments to their own teachers. Gratuity, which was a contractual obligation, has not been paid to the teachers of private colleges. Even salaries are often not paid until government grants are received. The contract of appointing a teacher implies that salaries have to be paid irrespective of what arrangement the institution has with the government regarding grants. Today there are over 500 teachers in private colleges in Bombay who have not received their salaries from June 1985. Most of the institutions claim minority status and quote Article 30 (1) to throw out teachers.

This is the record of private management in higher education. It is also the record in other private educational institutions. The government pays but the managements retain the right to hire and fire, to use and misuse funds, to bestow favours and to flout directions and provisions in the Acts.

The teachers' movement in the country has been demanding an end to private ownership of institutions of learning. The AIFUCTO has demanded the universalisation of all colleges and their conversion into constituent colleges of the universities with a democratic structure of management. The document *Challenge of Education* is blissfully ignorant of this situation. It talks

of handing over of more institutions to the care of private managements. This is one of the most dangerous propositions in this document.

Fee Increase Mooted

The document also suggests an overall increase in fees. While justifying capitation fees, the document goes further and says that fees should be increased, and for those who are poor there should be scholarships. The document does not care to quantify poverty for establishing norms of giving scholarships. The result would be the hiking of the fees, thereby contributing further to the drop out from the institutions of education.

The 10+2+3 pattern has resulted in a steep drop in the enrolment at the university level. In backward areas like Marathwada in Maharashtra, the drop is even more pronounced. Many colleges have been depleted of student strength. These have been termed as unviable colleges. The document proposes the closing down of all such colleges. There will soon be a proposal to close down unviable subjects, that is subjects where the number of students is below say 20 at the degree level. These dangerous proposals will be complementing the drive to curtail education through this fee rise. The entire democratic movement in the country has to take this up as a challenge and build up resistance to fee increase and the closure of the so-called unviable institutions.

Depoliticisation

The rulers well know that these proposals are going to meet stiff resistance from the people and their representatives in the elected bodies at the university. The recent past is replete with examples of brave struggles of teachers and students and parents against undemocratic moves in the field of education. In Maharashtra, we launched a powerful united struggle against a highly undemocratic University Act.

The framers of the document dub this as political manoeuvring. The cry for depoliticising education is to be seen in this context. It is not that the rulers want to keep politics away from education. I have already quoted the section in the document where they admit that in planning for education they have to keep in mind their political constraints.

The Education Minister at the centre and in every state is a political person, a member of a political party. The presiding authority in every university, the Chancellor, is very often a retired politician, and sometimes, as was seen in the episode of the dismissal of the Andhra Ministry, a person not fully retired from politics. Under these conditions, what does the call for depoliticisation mean? It only means that the increasing united struggles of the teachers and the students for their just demands have to be checked. Every serious teacher who sees that protest has to be registered against the wrong policies of the authorities becomes a persona-non grata. Such teachers are to be curbed. This is the only meaning of depoliticisation. Teachers' democratic rights as well as the rights of employees and students are to be res-

stricted through legislation. At present, the university bodies as well as the local managing bodies are heavily weighted against the employees. While there are provisions for elected representatives of donors, there is no provision for elected representatives of the employees or students in the Senates of most universities.

Calcutta University and other universities in West Bengal are honourable exceptions and they have a quantum of elected representatives from trade unions, peasant organisations, etc. Universities should reflect the aspirations of the common people. This can be achieved only through the process of democratisation of their entire structure. While the rulers want to restrict democracy under the plea for depoliticisation, the common people should aggressively fight for democratisation of all educational institutions.

We may sum up our recommendations as follows:

- (1) Implement the constitutional commitment of compulsory and free education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. We shall not allow the rulers to evade this responsibility.
- (2) Increase the inputs into education. A minimum of 10 per cent of the Gross National Product should go into educational development.
- (3) Delink education and the economy from the dictates of the foreign agencies like the World Bank and IMF which suggest streamlining expenditure on public services, greater restriction of those working in these sectors, and also suggest greater automation and computerisation.
- (4) Expand educational facilities at all levels from primary to university. No moratorium on opening of educational institutions. Give greater facilities to students in the form of two meals at elementary levels, free books, uniforms, extended facilities of freeships and scholarships. As a first step, make education free up to Standard XII in all states.
- (5) Greater inputs into vocationalisation, stop capitation fees. Admissions to be purely on merit with special training facilities to students coming from backward class and scheduled caste backgrounds to compete as equals. Reservation of seats for BC and SC students to continue until these facilities are fully developed.
- (6) Ending of the private sector in the field of education and handing over all educational institutions to democratically set up public agencies. All colleges to be converted into constituent colleges of the university with full democratic rights for teachers, students and employees.
- (7) Drop the dual educational system of two streams, one for the common man and the other for the elite. A single school system and a single system of higher education in the country.
- (8) Non formal education and distance education to be made as a supplementary programme to strengthen the present system of education and not as a substitute education for the poor.

- (9) Guarantee jobs to all students who pass out, and immediately announce unemployment allowance for all students who are unable to get jobs after education
- (10) Full job protection to teachers, proper scales and other facilities for improvement of their living conditions and their effectiveness
- (11) A simultaneous promulgation of codes of conduct for teachers and managers in education to be formulated democratically and to be accepted voluntarily by all the parties

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Non-formal Education in the New Education Policy

AT PRESENT, a lot is being said on new education policy though its various features have not yet been spelt out concretely. Available information on education indicates that the state of education in India, whether at the primary, secondary or higher level, is deplorable. Despite the constitutional directive, free and compulsory education to children between 6-14 years is a far cry. There are large drop-out ratios at every stage of education. A large number of schools lack even the basic facilities like buildings, teachers, blackboards, drinking water, toilets, etc. The state of our higher education is worse. These are facts which have been accepted by our educational planners. However, despite the extremely low base of primary and secondary education and the very low rate of participation in higher education (the proportion of students enrolled in higher education to the population in the relevant age-group, i.e., 17-23 years, is only 4.8 per cent), the educational managers in India continue to follow the policy of restricting education, specially at the higher level, and the government has been spending less and less, in relative terms, on education. In fact, the architects of our education policy admit that "any substantial improvement in educational coverage as well as retention, which constitutes the core of universalisation of elementary education efforts, will not only require significant increase in educational expenditure on elementary education but will also have a multiplier effect on the total educational budget through increased enrolments in the secondary and higher education. Hence, policy deliberations vis-a-vis universalisation of elementary education need to be matched with hard financial decisions" (*Challenge of Education*, page 88, 4.64). In the context of 'hard financial decisions', the very next para (4.65) is quite revealing: "Alternatively, other educational approaches, such as non-formal/distance education, and vocationalisation have to be worked out in detail for a large scale implementation, and replication."

Thus, it is clear that faced with pressure of democratic demand for education (particularly higher education, the narrow base of our education pyramid notwithstanding), which is reflected in the scramble for admissions every year, our educational managers take shelter behind the argument of paucity of resources for this stupendous task and justify the policy of restricting education on the one hand and talk of 'alternative educational approaches' (such as non-formal/distance education) on the other. Understandably, they do not highlight the low-cost aspect of these alternative

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educational approaches, while stressing vigorously 'the promise of new educational initiatives' in view of the 'large network of television and radio stations' While justifying the diversion of the overflow from the regular educational channels to the non-formal channels of education at all levels, they explain how the new educational technology can 'revolutionise the teaching-learning system by enriching formal education and also by supporting non-formal education as well as the distance learning systems' While doing all this, they completely ignore the well-accepted fact that the two kinds of education imparted through formal and non-formal channels respectively, are not comparable commodities

In view of the above, the purpose of this paper is to establish the following points :

1) Non-formal or Distance Education, though necessary for particular sections of learners who cannot avail of formal educational channels, is *not* a substitute for initial education,

2) even in the case of genuine distance learners, there is a strong academic case for integration of distance education with the mainstream while the separation of the two, apart from academic lacuna, is fraught with serious political consequences in a democratic polity,

3) integration of distance education with the mainstream, accompanied by the emergence of a full-fledged department of educational methodology, will lead to research in applied educational sciences and, in turn, increase the intake of regular educational institutions through optimum combination of educational inputs, thus taking care of the problem of resources to some extent.

For this, it is first necessary to explain the real purpose of non-formal distance education and also the background of British Open University—one of the premier institutions of non-formal education. As far as the purpose of distance education is concerned, it is to bring into the fold of education those who, for various reasons, lost their initial chance of receiving it or those who need it as a life-long process. It is certainly not meant to keep students clamouring for initial higher education at a 'distance' from the mainstream, with a view to protecting and perpetuating elitism in education.

In Britain, the conventional universities refused to own the responsibility of distance education and this led to the establishment of the Open University, away from the mainstream of higher education. Following this example, many other countries have already established (and some are in the process of establishing) separate universities or institutions for distance teaching, primarily with a view to keeping claimants of initial higher education away from the mainstream and thus preserving the elitist citadel of conventional universities. The establishment of such separate institutions for distance education has created and perpetuated a kind of dichotomy in the sphere of higher education which has proved to be the biggest hurdle for the development of optimum teaching methodologies.

Away From Mainstream Education

While studying the nature and implications of distance education in India, the first name that comes to mind is the British Open University which is regarded as the model of distance education and whose 'success' is often quoted as an argument for establishing similar institutions in various parts of the world

From the need for constant updating and refreshing of knowledge, because of rapid technological and social developments, emerged new concepts like 'education permanente', 'recurrent education' and 'continuing education'. As a consequence of all this, the demand for higher education, both regular and part-time, increased phenomenally

Under pressure of high popular demand for educational opportunities and recommendations of various committees and commissions, there was considerable expansion of initial higher education through opening of new colleges and universities in U K. But this expansion was accepted quite grudgingly and actual facilities did not increase in proportion to the increase in numbers. A lot of hue and cry was raised over the 'deterioration in standards' which in fact meant an erosion in the elitist character of higher education. Statements like 'more is worse' were made by the elite and universities were described as 'diploma mills', all this in order to condemn and stop the expansion in higher education

In contrast to the expansion, though inadequate and accepted grudgingly, of initial higher education, nothing was seriously done to take care of the demand for higher education on a part-time basis (i.e., demand for a second chance and for continuing education). Before the establishment of Open University, some people had raised the very pertinent question as to why part-time adult education could not be undertaken by the established universities as part of their teaching programmes. The attitude of the established universities was most conservative and arrogant in this regard. "The overriding view in the academic community was that this problem (of distance education) did not concern them; it ought to concern somebody else."

The academics in the established universities ridiculed the very idea of teaching without class-room lectures since they considered class-room teaching as 'inevitable' and 'inherently desirable'. Towards 'University of the Air' or 'Open University' they adopted an attitude of scepticism, contempt and ridicule. And prior to his joining the Open University as its first Vice-Chancellor, Perry himself regarded University of the Air "as a political gimmick, unlikely ever to be put into practice, and likely if it were to produce only a few graduates of relatively poor quality". The crux of all this is that the established universities were not prepared to touch distance education even with a pair of tongs

By now, it is crystal clear that it was because of the British academic community's above attitude towards distance education that the establishment of the Open University as a separate institution (outside the framework of the

conventional universities) became a necessity. Perry did not deny the theoretical possibility of the established universities tackling this problem. The hard fact was that the vested interests wanted to preserve the elitist character of higher education at any cost.³ In this situation, when there was pressure of demand for higher education on a part-time basis on the one hand, and refusal of the vested interests to accept any change in the elitist character of the existing universities while meeting this demand on the other, the idea of the "University of the Air" or the "Open University" suggested itself as a compromise solution. Development of broadcasting which happened to occur at this time provided the semblance of feasibility to this idea. Also, the success of correspondence education in USSR (though the context and the socio-political system there are quite different) provided Mr. Wilson, the then Prime Minister of Britain, the political opportunity of setting up the 'Open University' in the name of 'educational egalitarianism'. Thus, the basically inequalitarian and elitist British system of higher education was kept intact by setting up Open University to act as a safety valve to release excessive pressure on the established system.

It should be noted, however, that Perry's views on distance education related to the category of genuine distance learners (i.e., mature adults with greater motivation, sense of purpose and life experience) who, for one reason or another, could not come to the campus and for whom distance education was really meant. It was certainly not meant for or even considered suitable for young school leavers. It was clearly recognised that though distance education could perhaps be provided at a comparatively lower cost, it was neither suitable to young school leavers (who lacked the maturity required for self-learning) nor could it offer the same 'product' to them (as it lacked the socialisation component of education).⁴

Walter Perry was aware of the 'pitifully inadequate' standard of teaching that went on in established universities. He had tried some tentative experiments but realised that his concept ran counter to the established practices. He thought that a similar approach would be needed in the context of teaching at a distance, which would ultimately spread back into the conventional universities and thus raise standards of teaching everywhere.⁵ And in his application for Vice-Chancellorship of the Open University, he made a statement to that effect.⁶

What is interesting to note in Perry's observation is his idea of reforming teaching methods in conventional universities from outside—from the platform of the Open University. It is astounding how anyone could visualise that the established universities, determined to preserve their citadel of elitism and thus refusing to have anything to do with part-time education, would improve their methodology by adopting the innovations of distance teaching universities. It is this surprisingly naive idea of reform (from outside) which has been uncritically incorporated by a number of other countries as one of the objectives of their Open Universities or similar institutions.

Education Remains Elitist

The establishment of Open University in Britain as a separate institution for distance education (outside the framework of the established universities) became a necessity because the established universities refused to own distance education as their responsibility. Had these universities accepted it as their concern, the whole set-up would have been different. Distance education was not intended to be a substitute for initial higher education. In fact, it was considered unsuitable for young school leavers. Therefore, it was supposed to cater to a different clientele—to carry education to the door-steps of those mature adults (with greater motivation and sense of purpose) who, for various reasons, could not come to the campus to receive education. It is clearly borne out by the following facts, (a) only those who were 21 years of age and above, were eligible for admission, (b) there were no other entry qualifications except age and (c) the first year courses were invariably foundation courses meant for the beginners.

However, the Open University offered the same courses as were offered by conventional universities. This is understandable as in a market economy, the requirements are determined by the market which dictates the established structure as well as those working on the periphery. Distance education was frankly admitted to be a kind of 'second best' and the degrees to be awarded by the Open University were not claimed to be at par with those of the conventional universities, even by the planners of the Open University.⁷

Finally, the elitist conventional universities did not permit any change in established teaching practices while Perry thought (though quite naively) that improvements in the methods of teaching brought about by the Open University would ultimately spread back into the established universities and raise the standards of teaching everywhere.

A Different Perspective

As discussed earlier, the British Open University was established as an autonomous institution in the field of distance education against a certain background and with a definite objective in view. However, some countries have established (and some are in the process of setting up) similar institutions, but with a different purpose and perspective. In U.K., the Open University was launched, while preserving the elitist character of conventional higher education, to take education to the door steps of those who, for various reasons, could not come to the campuses. This category included (a) adults bypassed by regular university education, (b) more ambitious adults who wanted to add to their qualifications and (c) adults who wanted it on a continuing basis for updating their knowledge. Hence, the clientele consisted of mature adults with greater motivation, sense of purpose and life experience, compared to young school leavers. In contrast to this, in some other countries including India, institutions of non-formal education have been started with a view primarily to keeping current school leavers clamouring for regular higher education away from campuses mainly for preserving

the elitist character of higher education. Some of the professed aims of establishing such institutions are the following,

- to absorb the overflow of school leavers who fail to get admission in regular colleges and contribute to a significant reduction of unit costs in higher education,

- to keep students away from campuses where they are 'lik 1 to get politicised',

- to make education more relevant to social needs through vocationalisation, and

- to engage in the reform of university teaching by developing new methodologies

Regarding the first objective, it can be said that its two parts are two sides of the same coin. It is often argued that when resources are limited, it is wiser to concentrate them over a few institutions (the so-called centres of excellence) rather than spreading them thinly over a large number of institutions and to shunt the overflow of students to the low cost alternative of distance teaching. This argument is completely misleading. Firstly, we do not need scholars in abundance, but we do need a population educated to the limit of their individual capacities. Secondly, scholarship (or excellence) is the product not only of the environment provided by educational institutions but also of the innate abilities of the people. Scientific enquiries have shown that distribution of innate abilities among people is normal, with most people falling in the middle and a small fraction being exceptionally intelligent or exceptionally dull.

From this it follows that greater the equality of educational opportunities, greater the scope for the emergence and nurture of excellence and vice versa. It is surprising that the arguments in favour of concentrating limited resources over a few institutions are advanced particularly in those countries where even universal elementary education is still a distant dream and where university enrolments as a percentage of the relevant age group are quite low by international standards. In the name of limited resources, the dual policy of maintaining a high quality sector for the elite and a poor quality sector for the under-privileged cannot go on indefinitely in a democratic society without accumulating tensions inherent in such a policy. The real intent of such policies is to perpetuate elitism rather than "nurture of excellent".

As far as the objective of keeping students away from the campuses for political reasons is concerned, it is sufficient to point out that, "the root causes (of unrest) lie not in higher education but in the society as a whole, that students are, to a large extent, sharing the tensions and strains and widely varying reactions of the comparable age group outside the universities and colleges. Their intellectual and moral sensitivities and their articulateness may be greater and they have peculiar difficulties of their own but it is the outside world and its changes which bite most hard. The wild thrashing around which seems to characterise many of their actions, the sudden escala-

tion of conflict arising from apparently trivial incidents are indicative of the desperation which so many young people feel because of the profundity of the gulf which lies between the ideas and the reality, democracy and justice as they are preached and practised”⁸ In other words, the campus unrest is the product of the general social discontent arising out of the deepening economic crisis, acute socio-economic inequalities and general degeneration of values. In fact, teaching claimants for higher education by two qualitatively different methods is itself a potential source of unrest.

Regarding the relevance of higher education, it is argued that conventional universities have concentrated on traditional and socially prestigious courses, ignoring educated manpower requirements of the country and are producing obsolete knowledge. Therefore, it is contended that, to make education more relevant to social needs, a separate distance teaching set-up is required because the existing system has developed certain rigidities and is not amenable to change. It is interesting to note that such theories about the alleged irresponsiveness of the conventional universities are advanced in market economies where the job market is supposed to determine the type of product to be produced by the universities.

In India we have witnessed, in recent years, violent swings in student enrolments from science courses to commerce and management courses and vice versa in response to the slightest changes in the moods of the job market. In fact, in market economies, such situations emerge on account of failure to generate enough employment opportunities as a result of which the products of the universities appear to be “excessive” or “obsolete”. Universities are not independent entities whose course cannot be changed. Is it not necessary for the conventional universities also to vocationalise their courses?

Regarding the objective of reform of university teaching, we have already hinted at the naivety of this argument. It is beyond comprehension how conventional universities can be induced to reform their teaching methods when they do not feel the need for doing so. Their teaching methods suit the situation they are placed in. Unless distance teaching becomes an integral part of their academic responsibilities and reform of teaching methods becomes a necessity for them, they cannot be expected to accept any ‘grafting’ from outside. We take this up in detail later on.

It needs to be emphasized at this stage that none of the above arguments logically leads to the division of claimants for regular higher education to the non-formal channels of education, and even in the case of genuine distance learners, to the creation of a separate institution away from the mainstream of higher education. The remedy rather lies in curing the ailing education system itself. If the problem is one of resource constraint, then the solution is to determine national priorities regarding the quantum of education, including higher education, rather than creating a low-cost sector of education along with a quality sector where finance is no problem. There is no need to say that keeping students away from campuses and hoping to combat student unrest in this way, rather than being a solution, is bound to aggravate social

tensions further in a democratic society. As far as the objective of making education relevant to social needs is concerned, obviously it is a laudable aim and applies to education in general.

Educational Planning Under Socialism

Very often examples of socialist countries, particularly of the Soviet Union, are cited in support of the educational dualism referred to above. It is pointed out that after all, even in Soviet Russia, higher education is provided on a selective basis, that a sizeable chunk of the student population receive their higher education through evening and correspondence courses, that there are exclusive schools and academies for the nurture of excellence, etc. However, in these arguments, vital facts are ignored. For example, in Soviet Union education up to the X standard is compulsory so that every child gets equal opportunities for his development and the process of selection begins after that stage. There is no unemployment problem so that students not really interested or fit for higher education don't have to cling to institutions in the hope of improving their employment prospects.

Planning of higher education in USSR is based on manpower requirements of the country with the result that there are no locational or vocational mismatches. In the Soviet Union, correspondence and evening courses are meant only for the education of the in-service workers and not meant to absorb the overflow of current school leavers who fail to get admission in regular day institutions. Admissions to all the channels of higher education are merit-based, made on the basis of a single entrance examination. The same academic staff teach all the three categories of students, all students sit the same examinations so that standards are the same and no stigma is attached to education through correspondence. Lastly, exclusive academies are meant for the exceptionally gifted children and "excellence" is not "nurtured" on the basis of unequal opportunities. Most important of all, education (whether regular or correspondence or evening) is free throughout.

From Academic to Industrial Enterprise

Sometimes, the case for distance teaching institutions is based on economies of large-scale production through the use of mass communication media, mainly radio, television and printed material. Apart from the existence of economies of scale being questionable, the argument essentially implies standardised product whose cost of production is sought to be minimised through using large-scale production techniques typical of an industrial economy.

In many countries, the basic objective is to contain the pressure of democratic demand for higher education at the lowest cost. Instead of devising ways and means of increasing and facilitating mutual interaction between the teacher and students and among the students themselves, the use of this very critical input is minimised and the whole effort is concentrated on structuring and designing a package so meticulously that the student is turned into

a passive consumer of whatever is given to him. Herein lies the secret of providing 'education' at a lower cost compared to the cost of conventional education. In the process, the very essence of higher education—development of thinking and analytical faculties of human mind—is lost sight of. Scripts of study materials are written by outside 'experts' on a contractual basis (who lack understanding of and continuing stake or faith in the system), 'educational technologists' advise or decide about the form of presentation of the material, mediemen have their own angle to look at the matter, editing may be done by another set of persons, and finally, the most crucial element of interaction through face-to-face tuition or guidance (if any) and through written assignments is delegated to adjunct staff. In brief, the whole thing works like almost an assembly line in a big factory and there is a high degree of fragmentation. Thus, the academic enterprise is turned into an industrial enterprise and a static relationship between the teacher and the taught (via 'autodidactic packages') replaces the dynamic process of interaction which is the essence of the process of education.

Teaching, in fact, cannot organically be separated from learning and both are meant to sharpen the thinking and analytical faculties of human mind, rather than teaching being a passing on of a given package of knowledge from the teacher to the student. Apart from constant increase in the quantum of knowledge (including refutation of old theories and thesis), which the teacher incorporates at every point of time, the manner of presentation also undergoes a continuous change in the light of interaction between the teacher and the taught. Therefore, the academics cannot be taught how to teach, least of all through a grafting from outside. It is only through the constant interaction and exchange amongst 'learners' (whether they are teachers or students) that the optimum teaching methodology can emerge and be accepted by the academics.

An Integrated Approach

It is interesting to note that in the literature on distance education, views opposed to setting up of autonomous distance teaching universities and in favour of an integrated model are either disposed of summarily or ignored completely. In this context, it would be very pertinent to quote the opinion of a commission appointed by the Whitlam Labour Government in 1973 on the founding of an open university for Australia. The Commission rejected the idea of setting up a separate distance teaching university for Australia and voted in favour of the existing system known as the Australian Integrated Model under which all academics have two responsibilities (one for the on-campus students and the other for the off-campus students) on the ground that "if it (the Commission) were to limit its recommendations to the creation of a single major institution like the British Open University, it might actually reduce the likelihood of existing institutions adopting innovative policies."¹

Therefore, if the purpose is to reform and improve university teaching, the best way to go about it is to integrate distance education with the

mainstream of higher education. Let us try to visualise how this integrated model would function in practice. Under this model, (a) all academics share the responsibility of teaching regular as well as distance students, (b) there is a full-fledged department of applied educational sciences (or educational methodology) equipped with adequate facilities for research in human learning process (and also simple audio visual aid facilities as recommended by the UGC Task-Force on Mass Communication and Educational Technology)¹⁰ (c) the same courses are taught to on-campus as well as distance students and they take the same examinations.

Since all academics have to teach both types of students, development of appropriate techniques becomes a necessity for them and improvements in teaching necessarily flow from one sector to other, reinforcing improvement in the former. In the case of distance students who lack direct contact with the teacher, instructional materials have to be structured in a manner that facilitates self-learning, and then communicated to them. However, instructional materials designed to suit the needs of distance students are useful for the on-campus student as well and communication of such materials poses no problem in this case. This scheme of things offers the additional advantage of pre-testing the pedagogic value of such materials in regular institutions and making necessary improvements on the basis of feed-back. It also makes it possible to reap the economies of large-scale production of study materials, at the same time, providing for constant updating and improvements. Thus, properly structured study materials can greatly facilitate the learning process of students of both the categories and minimise their dependence on sub-standard text books and cheap notes available in the market. Of course, preparation of such study materials essentially involves team work and calls for a new division of labour in higher education. Undoubtedly, the kind of set up we have visualised is most conducive for the creation of any number of teams since a large number of teachers in each discipline will be available. This integration of regular and distance teaching in various disciplines will also provide the best ground for cross-fertilisation of academic ideas.

In a regular institution, every subject has to be covered wholly through class-room lectures and very little is left to the student for self-learning. In fact, it should be possible to pick up portions of a topic (and of a subject and thus of a full course) which instead of being covered in class-room lectures, can be conveniently and usefully shifted on to the student for self-learning. This will not only reduce the amount of lecturing needed by a teacher to cover a topic or subject, but will also enable him to stick to the logical thread of his argument without having to digress into related matters or concepts, which he has to do if the basic contents are not understood by the student in advance.

There are a number of technological devices available at the moment which, without affecting the quality of teaching, can reduce unnecessary drudgery involved in certain aspects of teaching. For example, during the course of a lecture, a teacher may have to waste a lot of his valuable time in writing long passages or tables, drawing complicated diagrams or sketches

on the black-board. With the help of an overhead projector, these things can be shown on the screen instantaneously if the necessary materials are prepared in advance.

Moreover, it is a recognised fact that there do exist some exceptionally good teachers who are extremely effective as far as communication of knowledge is concerned. It should be perfectly possible to use audio or video tapes to make such excellent teaching available to larger numbers. Thus, it is possible that, without cutting into the essential socialisation component of higher education, use of technological devices can greatly reduce the drudgery part of teaching, improve the quality of instruction and increase the intake of students in regular institutions.

To illustrate our point about the usefulness of the integrated model, we take the example of Delhi University where about 1.05 lakhs of students were pursuing under-graduate courses during 1982-83 through 5 distinct channels—regular day colleges, evening colleges, correspondence courses, non-collegiate women delegacy and the external cell. The mode of instruction in regular colleges is class-room lecturing while in correspondence courses, the major medium of instruction is the printed study material supplemented by a few (say 20) capsuled lectures per subject. Non-collegiate women delegacy provides 35 to 40 capsuled class-room lectures per subject to the students (by inviting teachers from various colleges on Sundays and other holidays) and the external cell only registers students for the external degrees of Delhi University. Now, if the teachers concerned with the teaching of various subjects in regular colleges and correspondence courses are merged with their respective subject departments at the university level and along with it, a separate department of educational methodology equipped with adequate research facilities and a small audio-visual aid centre (on the pattern suggested by UGC Task Force) is established, a framework comes into existence in which optimum educational methodology based on research in human learning processes can grow out of the soil of the university.

To sum up, we can say that the academic advantage of the integrated model is that (a) it creates the necessity for improving teaching methods, and (b) it provides the most fertile ground for the growth of teaching methodologies. As a result, quality of teaching improves everywhere whose benefits are reaped by regular as well as distance students. Besides, a judicious use of modern teaching aids and machines helps in reducing the required teaching time and even a minor reduction may make it possible to have two shifts in colleges, thus making a more intensive use of the educational infrastructure and increasing significantly the intake in colleges. However, such matters are rarely, if ever, decided purely on the basis of academic considerations. In under-developed economies which are dominated by private sector and cannot generate sufficient employment opportunities, the powers-that-be regard education as an encumbrance, apart from being a wastage, and try to provide semblance of education at the

lowest possible cost, by using the institutions of non-formal distance education as dumping grounds. This, in a nutshell, is the case in India, in relation to higher education.

Untenable Arguments

Till now, we have been talking of non-formal system in the sphere of higher education, where there does exist a category of genuine distance learners who have not been able to avail of formal education channels for various reasons and in whose case there is a need to take education to the door-steps. Evidently, it is not possible to visualise the case for non-formal education at the school level since the 'greater motivation, sense of purpose and life experience' of the young pupils are out of question (We are not talking of adult education where the case for non-formal education may be slightly stronger). But our educational ideologues do not hesitate in stating proudly, "In the context of elementary education, the new initiative through the Non-formal Education Programme also needs some mention. This programme started only towards the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan in the nine educationally backward states. It incorporates a much greater measure of flexibility in terms of teacher pupil ratio, qualifications of teachers, timing of classes, speed of learning, etc. Initially, it was conceived to meet the needs of drop-outs, especially girls, who, it was felt, could not come to the regular schools because of other pressures and preoccupations. Now, faced with *other constraints* non-formal education is being assigned a very large responsibility in relation to the achievement of universalisation of elementary education by 1990. It is expected that of the additional 64 million children coming up for elementary education, nearly 39 million will be educated entirely through this system"¹¹ It does not require much imagination to realise what these 'other constraints' are. A clue can be found in the Appendices to the Challenge of Education. In the paragraph on Non-formal Educational Programmes, it is said, "since children of the socially disadvantaged groups will continue to work at home or outside and *financial constraints will stand in the way of opening formal schools*, Non-formal Education Programme will have to be expanded during the 7th Five Year Plan. The Sixth Plan made a beginning and a big leap is called for in the Seventh Plan"¹²

The first paragraph under the heading 'Priorities in Educational Development' in the document Challenge of Education, speaks rhetorically of the role of elementary education. "Elementary education is the most crucial stage of education spanning the first eight years of schooling and laying the foundation for the personality, attitudes, social confidence, habits, learning skills and communicating capabilities of pupils. The basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic are acquired at this stage. Values are internalised and environmental consciousness sharpened. This is the stage when physical growth can be assisted, interests in sports and adventure can be roused, and manual dexterity can also be developed. If a child goes through good education at this stage, he never looks back in life for then he has been prepared to exercise his initiatives to overcome difficulties"¹³ While agreeing basically

with the role of elementary education enunciated above, one is left wondering, and no attempt is made to explain, how non-formal system at the level of elementary education is going to help in achieving this. Understandably, the ideologues are aware of 'several reservations, hesitations and doubts about the programme' and find it necessary 'that the public opinion is motivated in favour of non-formal education'. The sense of guilt is expressed in the fear, "Society should not get the impression that two types of education are being made available—one, which is superior, for those who can afford, and the other for those who cannot afford the facility of formal schooling"¹¹ What is surprising is that rather than having an open debate on the non-formal system of education at the school level and convincing the society of its role and importance, it has been thought fit to go ahead with its implementation. "The data available for 1982-83 indicates that substantial progress has been made towards the opening of non-formal centres as well as promoting enrolments therein. In the educationally backward states alone, which were the focal point of the non-formal education programme, more than sixty eight thousand centres have been opened for this purpose. About ninety per cent of these centres are for primary education while the remaining are for the middle level."¹² In these centres, 14.7 lakh students were enrolled across the nine educationally backward states. On an average, each non-formal education centre for primary education had nearly twenty students while for the middle level it was fifteen."¹³ Non-formal part-time education system has been developed in a large way as an alternative supportive system (mark, 'alternative' as well as 'supportive') to formal schooling. Under this system, children who cannot join and attend the formal schools because of socio-economic reasons are offered elementary education of the same standard at places and timings suited to their needs and convenience. Children in the age-group 9-14 (9-11 for the middle level) are offered education in non-formal centres in a graded and condensed form. As a part of this scheme, grants are also given to voluntary organisations for running the programme of non-formal education. By 1984-85, about 1.41 lakh centres enrolling about 3 million children were established particularly in educationally backward states of the country."¹⁴

It is important to note that nothing is known about the basic structure of these non-formal centres, how they function and 'impart' elementary education to the millions of students enrolled, pedagogic differences between formal schooling and non-formal system of school education, etc. One does not know whether the resources spent on these centres achieve something in terms of effective literacy, or go down the drain as is the case with many programmes in India. Another claim about the non-formal education relates to the use of new educational technology. It is suggested that, "Use of mass media for non-formal education programme should be explored. With the network of radio reaching the farthest corner of the country and television facilities also expanding with the launching of INSAT-IB, non-formal education system should avail of these facilities."¹⁵ Though it is also recognised "that irrespective of the content, quality and arrangements for

dissemination, the impact of educational programmes will depend essentially upon the availability of radios, television sets, tape recorders, video cassette players, etc. All these are quite expensive and what is more, require reliable management for repair and maintenance. If adequate funds cannot be provided for their supply to schools, and for their upkeep and use, it would not be possible to realise the potential of the new technologies.¹ But our educational ideologues are undaunted by realities on the ground and are extremely impatient to take the nation to the 21st century with the help of impressive programmes like Computer Literacy Programme (CLASS). The most intriguing aspect of the whole thing is that the new educational technology is supposed to be used in the non-formal system of education which is precisely meant for the backward and disadvantaged sections of society for whom this technology is most inaccessible.

1. Perry, Open University, 1976, p. 5.

2. *Ibid.* preface, page XIII.

3. *Ibid.* p. 1.

4. *Ibid.* p. 57.

'We were all aware that the country faced an increase in demand from school leavers for university education and it was in some ways tempting to offer to meet some of this demand. If we were right in assuming that our education would be cheaper than that in a conventional university, we could offer substantial savings to whatever government was in power. On the other hand, we felt that to follow a course of study in isolation demanded qualities of maturity that would usually be lacking in people as young as 18. I also believed, as did many of my colleagues, that a young person of 18 would be missing a great deal if he were denied the opportunity of studying in a regular college with all that it offered in the way of social life and the stimulation of colleagues.

5. *Ibid.* preface.

6. *Ibid.* p. 54.

7. *Ibid.* p. 57.

'I think we all felt that what we could offer was very much a second best for people of this age. We offered a chance to those who had not been able to go to regular universities, the only chance that such people could have.

8. Navak and others, "A Fresh Look at Higher Education," Chapter IV.

9. Distance Teaching Universities, edited by Rumble and Harry McCormick, 1982.

10. UGC Task Force Report, pp. 56-58.

11. *Challenge of Education*, pp. 39-40 (para 3.13).

12. *Appendices to Challenge of Education*, pp. 1-31, 32.

13. *Challenge of Education*, p. 5 (para 1.12).

14. *Appendices to Challenge of Education*, p. 1-32 (para 4.10).

15. *Challenge of Education*, p. 22 (para 2.23).

16. *Ibid.* p. 23 (para 2.24).

17. *Appendices to Challenge of Education*, pp. 1-6 (para 3.3.3).

18. *Ibid.* pp. 1-32 (para 4.10).

19. *Challenge of Education*, p. 78 (para 4.36).

BALAJI PANDEY *

Educational Development Among Scheduled Castes

THE MID-NINETEENTH century social reform movement directed its campaign against child-marriage, sati, promotion of women's education, widow remarriage etc., through the platforms of Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj. The movement's greatest drawback was its limitation to the upper castes. This caste bias was apparent because its leadership invariably came from the caste Hindus. The only exception was the emergence of Jyotiba Phule, himself a lower caste, who started a movement through which he 'asserted the worth of man irrespective of caste'.¹ Phule provided the leadership for the anti-caste movement in Maharashtra and his 'passion for the untouchables was unheard of and his sense of justice included every oppressed caste and he had absolutely no caste bias'.² He demanded equality for all and his movement was against untruth, injustice and hypocrisy of the Hindu social order dominated by Brahmin supremacy.³ Phule held the view that the low status of shudras was due to the denial of education to them. Through his organisation, the *Satya Sodhak Samaj*, he propagated that "for want of education their intellect deteriorated, for want of intellect their morality decayed, for want of morality their progress stopped, for want of progress their health vanished, all their sorrows sprung from illiteracy".⁴ In 1848, he opened a school for non-Brahmins in Poona and⁵ three years later established what is considered as 'the first school in India for untouchables'.⁶ As a result of Phule's untiring campaign against untouchability, and for the uplift of the untouchables, some of the other socio-religious movements also gradually started organising schools for them.

Credit must be given to the movement launched by Phule which forced the colonial administration to open the doors of government schools to the low caste communities. Here, mention may be made of the well-known 'Dharwar Case' which occurred in 1854 when a low caste boy sought permission for admission in a government school at Dharwar. The administration refused permission on the grounds that if permitted, children of caste Hindus would withdraw from the school and which would virtually lead to the closure of institutions. However, the matter was noticed by the Government of India who referred the issue to the Court of Directors of the Company. The Directors opined that no exclusion solely on the ground of caste should be

allowed "The educational institutions of the government are intended by us to be opened to all classes and we cannot depart from a principle which is, essentially sound and the maintenance of which is of the first importance. It is not impossible that in some cases the enforcement of the principle may be followed by the withdrawal of a portion of the scholars, but with regard to the assumed unwillingness of the wealthier classes to contribute to the establishment of such schools, it is sufficient to remark that those persons who object to its practical enforcement, will be at liberty to withhold their contributions and to apply their funds, if they think fit, to the formation of schools on a different basis" ⁷ Therefore, although government schools were open for all castes, the upper-castes also got the freedom to set up schools exclusively for its members

In view of the opinion expressed by the Court of Directors, the first Indian Education Commission in 1882 recommended that "all primary schools wholly maintained at the cost of school boards and all primary schools that are aided from the same fund and are not registered as special schools, should be understood to be open to all castes and class of the community" ⁸ Despite this policy, the colonial administration did not make serious efforts to promote education among lower castes. The reason for such non-committal attitude of the administration was due to the severity of untouchability prevalent in the country and any attempt to promote education among them would have invited wrath from the high caste Hindus. More than that, the British were not interested in disturbing the existing land relations on which rested the caste system. Thus, they were not able to bring about any real change in the situation of untouchables. Only a very small section of them could receive education and most of them were those who were influenced by missionary activities or who had converted to Christianity or received concessions from princely states ⁹ Commenting on the progress of Education among this section, a retired official of Indian Education Services observed, "We have to consider in its bearing on mass education, the position of the depressed classes. The depressed or untouchable classes include about sixty million persons. The existence of such masses obviously constitutes a grave obstacle to the extension of literacy" ¹⁰

A little over a hundred years ago, provincial governments in India had implemented special programmes for the welfare of "depressed" or deprived sections of society. In 1885, the Madras government framed the Grant-in-Aid Code to regulate financial aid to educational institutions with special facilities for students of "depressed classes"

In 1918, following representations from various communities, the Maharaja of Mysore appointed a committee—the Miller Committee—which in its report suggested special facilities to backward communities with regard to education and this was made into an official order in 1921. In 1928, the government of Bombay set up a committee under the Chairmanship of Mr O H B Sarte to identify Backward Classes and in 1931, this committee classified this section of the people into categories such as "Depressed

Classes", "Aboriginal and Hill Tribes", "Other Backward Classes" etc , and recommended special facilities regarding education for them

In Travancore, educational facilities for the untouchables started in 1926, The measures adopted were the offer of fee concessions, stipends, scholarships, boarding grants, free supply of text book etc In Cochin in 1926, the Director of Public Instruction was made the Protector of the depressed classes with a special staff and in 1931, a separate department was created to promote education In Baroda, separate schools were abolished in 1931 which was opposed vehemently by the caste Hindus They not only withdrew their children from schools but also set fire to the standing crops of the scheduled caste peasants

It needs to be stressed that these measures arose from a complex interaction between the colonial policy of divide and rule, the growing strength of the national movement and the emergence of non-Brahmin movements in parts of India Despite the campaign for promotion of education among this section, the progress was very slow, in fact insignificant According to the 1931 census the literacy rate among this section was just 1.9 per cent

The colonial policy of divide and rule, the non-Brahmin movements, in particular that led by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and the mobilisation of the "untouchable" masses by Gandhi in the 30's, their electoral significance, all combined to exert its influence on government policies in the post-independence era Soon after independence, the government assumed special responsibility to ameliorate the condition of Scheduled Castes In the field of education, the first and foremost measure was the Constitutional guarantee which says, "The state shall promote with special care, the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation" ¹¹ Recognising the importance of education as a vehicle for the uplift of this section of the people, the First Plan stated that "Education is the most urgent need of these communities" ¹² The untouchability (offence) Act of 1955 facilitated access of schooling to the children of these communities ¹³

The Government appointed a Backward Class Commission under the Chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar in 1953 to enquire into the causes for backwardness and also recommend measures for their uplift The Commission submitted its report in 1955 On the issue of education, the Commission commented that "*the problem of education in most of the states is chiefly the problem of the backward classes for it is they who are extremely backward in education*" ¹⁴ In its wide-ranging and comprehensive report, the Commission identified the following reasons for educational backwardness—

- "Traditional apathy for education on account of social and environmental conditions or occupational handicaps
- Poverty and lack of means of a large number of communities to educate their children
- Lack of educational institutions in the rural areas

- Living in inaccessible areas and lack of proper communications
- Lack of adequate educational aids in the form of freeship, scholarships and monetary grants for the purchase of books and clothing
- Lack of residential hostel facilities in places where educational institutions are situated
- Unemployment among the educated acting as a damper on the desire of some of the communities to educate their children
- Defective educational system which does not train students by appropriate occupations and professions

The Government, however, rejected the main recommendations of the Commission but asked the state governments to draw their own lists on the basis of criteria worked out by them and then take action

Despite the fact that the causes for educational backwardness among this section were identified in the early years of independence, the official documents on education prepared in the years that followed continued to stress the same views regarding the progress of education as had been identified by the Kalelkar Commission. A decade later, the first Education Commission¹⁵ discussed in detail all the aspects of education and its recommendations provided the basis for policy formulation. It said

“one of the important social objectives of education is to equalise opportunity enabling the backward or under privileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their condition. Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent, must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for the building up of an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimised

Two other forms of educational inequalities which are peculiar to the Indian situation need attention. The first is the wide disparity between the education of boys and girls at all stages and in all sectors of education. *The second is the equally wide or sometimes “wider disparity” of educational development between the advanced classes and the backward ones—the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. On grounds of social justice as well as for the furtherance of democracy, it is essential to make special efforts to equalise educational opportunities between these grounds”*

A Committee of six Members of Parliament, the President of the Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangh, and a Legal Adviser from the Law Minister was set up in 1965 to consider issues of untouchability, economic and educational development. Following discussion of its report in Parliament, a Parliamentary Committee was set up in August 1968. This reported that “In spite of increasing attention given since independence to the education of weaker sections of the community, the gap between their level of educational development and the average for the society as a whole, still continue to be very wide”

Although the National Policy on Education as far back as in 1968 called for strenuous efforts to equalise educational opportunity and more intensive efforts to develop education among the backward communities, the more recent Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the year 1979-1981 observed that 'the educational programmes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have not succeeded in achieving the desired impact although, the provision of funds for development programmes for these communities rose from Rs 39 crores in First Plan to Rs 327 crores in the Fifth Plan and a total of Rs 744 crores was spent till the end of the 1978-79. Of these amounts, nearly 48 per cent was spent on educational schemes alone" ¹⁶

Literacy

Literacy is an important indicator of progress both for society as a whole and for individual communities within it. In this context, the table below indicates that though there has been some improvement in the overall literacy rate in the post-independence period, nearly 80 per cent of the Scheduled Caste population have yet to report that they can '*read, write and understand*,' a definition utilised by the Census

Table I Literacy Rate

Year	Person	Males	Females
1961	10.27	16.16	3.29
1971	14.67	22.36	6.44
1981	21.38	31.12	10.82

SOURCE: Census of India

A comparison of literacy rate between general population (excluding Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes) and Scheduled Castes is indicated in the Table 2 and 3. The tables indicate that after 38 years of independence, the Constitutional guarantee for equality of opportunity in access to education, and recommendations of various committees and commissions to improve education among scheduled castes at par with the general population, the gap in literacy level is very high. Whereas nearly 42 per cent of the general population are literate (male 52.34 per cent, female 29.42 per cent), the literacy rate among Scheduled Castes is only 21.38 per cent (male 31.12 per cent, female 10.93 per cent), literacy in rural areas for general population is 35.22 per cent (male 46.12 per cent, female 21.68 per cent) but among Scheduled Castes it is only 18.48 per cent (male 27.91 per cent, female 8.45 per cent). In the urban areas, literacy among general population is 60.38 per cent (male 64.45 per cent, female 51.19 per cent), while among Scheduled Castes it is 36.60 per cent (male 47.54 per cent, females 24.34 per cent).

The gap in literacy rate among Scheduled Castes, between rural and urban, and between male and female is also very high. Nearly 72 per cent male in rural areas and 52 per cent in urban areas are illiterate. The corres-

ponding figures for females are 91.55 per cent and 75.66 per cent respectively. In Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, the female illiteracy rate among Scheduled Castes is over 90 per cent. In Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Punjab, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu, this rate ranges between 80 per cent to 90 per cent. The *Working Group on Development of Literacy among Scheduled Castes* (1980-85)¹⁷ commented that there were several districts in the country where the literacy rate among Scheduled Caste women is as low as one per cent going down to 0.2 per cent.

Table 2
Literacy Rates Among General Population 1981 (Inclusive of 0-4 Age)

	General Population (Excluding Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes)								
	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INDIA	41.30	52.34	29.42	34.22	46.13	21.68	60.38	64.45	51.19
Andhra Pradesh	33.90	44.03	23.54	26.78	26.83	16.60	54.06	63.98	43.60
Bihar	30.16	43.07	16.39	25.99	39.08	12.30	56.05	66.11	43.83
Gujarat	48.13	58.81	36.73	40.43	52.44	27.82	62.29	70.21	53.53
Haryana	39.90	52.16	25.83	33.36	46.99	17.85	61.19	68.78	44.51
Himachal Pradesh	47.36	58.08	36.89	45.08	56.14	33.48	71.09	76.08	64.76
Jammu & Kashmir	27.05	36.64	16.58	21.65	31.66	10.46	46.27	54.19	37.19
Karnataka	42.91	53.61	31.35	35.41	47.13	23.43	59.57	67.50	50.98
Kerala	72.49	77.16	67.97	71.41	76.26	66.72	76.91	80.78	73.12
Madhya Pradesh	36.14	49.19	22.00	28.07	42.10	13.12	58.08	67.88	46.95
Maharashtra	50.90	62.46	38.49	41.88	55.46	26.16	65.60	73.05	56.77
Manipur	42.10	55.16	28.63	37.42	50.82	23.60	51.93	64.30	39.18
Meghalaya	44.96	51.86	36.09	29.86	36.92	21.10	66.33	72.16	58.40
Nagaland	54.38	61.06	40.90	48.06	55.91	31.61	61.91	67.35	51.38
Orissa	43.01	55.77	29.84	39.71	52.81	26.53	61.81	71.29	50.49
Punjab	47.11	53.16	40.25	40.60	47.18	33.20	61.61	66.30	56.20
Rajasthan	29.30	42.13	15.30	21.61	34.64	7.59	52.22	64.28	39.43
Sikkim	34.84	44.83	22.36	30.91	41.23	18.60	55.31	61.41	45.55
Tamil Nadu	51.00	67.75	33.85	42.53	55.73	29.18	65.95	74.75	56.73
Tripura	53.92	62.87	44.40	49.37	58.99	39.08	75.98	81.93	69.80
Uttar Pradesh	30.45	42.51	16.79	25.94	38.79	11.54	48.48	57.01	38.40
West Bengal	48.12	57.81	37.38	41.85	50.44	31.59	66.00	72.07	58.54

SOURCE (a) Census of India General Population Table 1981

(b) Primary Census Abstract Castes Population 1981 Part II B (11)

Table 3

Literacy Rates Among Scheduled Caste Population-1981 (Inclusive of 0-4 Age)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21 38	31 12	10 93	18 48	27 91	8 45	36 60	47 54	24 34
17 65	23 82	10 26	14 05	20 66	7 28	37 70	47 78	27 09
10 40	18 02	2 51	9 11	16 26	1 78	24 27	35 89	10 83
39 79	53 14	25 61	34 93	48 72	20 54	49 79	62 01	36 35
20 15	31 45	7 06	18 73	29 93	5 82	28 16	39 84	14 21
31 50	41 94	20 68	30 42	40 82	19 66	50 69	60 28	39 18
22 44	32 34	11 70	21 36	31 38	10 52	30 69	39 66	20 86
30 59	29 35	11 55	15 36	23 64	6 88	39 22	49 38	28 45
55 96	62 33	49 73	54 75	61 19	48 45	64 75	70 61	59 00
18 97	30 26	6 87	15 37	25 99	4 07	35 48	49 40	20 01
35 55	48 85	21 53	30 21	44 00	16 01	47 13	59 02	39 96
33 63	41 94	24 95	31 84	40 27	23 08	42 63	50 10	34 51
25 78	33 28	16 30	22 54	31 07	12 53	29 54	35 66	21 09
22 41	35 26	9 40	21 72	34 50	8 84	29 00	42 36	14 94
23 86	30 96	15 67	22 74	29 84	14 58	28 70	35 80	20 43
14 04	24 40	2 69	11 26	20 51	1 18	26 75	41 94	9 71
28 06	35 74	19 65	22 65	30 27	14 28	47 91	55 94	39 20
29 67	40 65	18 47	25 92	36 90	14 73	44 54	55 38	33 57
33 89	43 92	23 24	32 93	42 96	22 30	48 08	58 21	37 26
14 96	24 83	3 90	13 51	23 19	2 72	27 39	38 46	14 27
24 37	34 26	13 70	22 62	32 56	12 01	36 76	45 65	26 27

Enrolment

According to the latest statistics available, the enrolment ratio¹⁸ of Scheduled Castes students at primary stage in 1980-81 was 82.2 per cent at the all India level. In the case of girls, this ratio was 57.8 per cent. At the middle levels, the enrolment ratio was 29.1 per cent and for girls 16.2 per cent. Data in Table 4 indicates the proportion of non-enrolled children at primary and middle school stages in all states. It can be seen that while around 2 per cent of boys are out of school, the figures for girls is more than 47.80 per cent belonging to 6-11 years age. Karnataka has the maximum number of non-enrolled boys (50.80 per cent), followed by Haryana (21.60 per cent), Rajasthan (20.90 per cent), Gujarat (19.60 per cent), in the primary stage. There is a high proportion of non-enrolled girls in the primary stage in Rajasthan (86.20 per cent), Bihar (79.30 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (74.70 per cent), Haryana (73.30 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (69.80 per cent). More than 60 per cent of the boys in the age 11-14 years are not enrolled. The states where 70 per cent and above of boys in this age group are not enrolled are Andhra Pradesh (75.30 per cent), Bihar (81.40 per cent), Nagaland (76.50 per cent), Tripura (83.70 per cent) and West Bengal (77.90 per cent). As against this, nearly 85 per cent of girls are not enrolled. States where proportion of non-enrolled girls are alarmingly high were Bihar 94 per cent, Haryana 95 per cent, Rajasthan 98 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 94 per cent and West Bengal 91 per cent.

Table 4

**PROPORTION OF NON-ENROLLED CHILDREN BELONGING TO SCHEDULED
CASTES AT PRIMARY AND MIDDLE STAGES**

	<u>SCHEDULED CASTES</u>			
	Primary (I-V/ 6-11 Years)		Middle (VI-VII/ (11-14 Years)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
INDIA	2 10	47 80	60 60	85 20
Andhra Pradesh	*	5 50	75 30	87 90
Assam	*	20 30	29 40	55 40
Bihar	19 60	79 30	81 40	97 30
Gujarat	*	5 80	30 40	70 30
Haryana	21 60	73 30	61 50	94 80
Himachal Pradesh	*	32 80	38 90	82 60
Jammu & Kashmir	4 10	57 50	52 90	84 70
Karnataka	50 80	58 00	64 20	81 10
Kerala	*	*	*	2 40
Madhya Pradesh	17 00	69 80	62 20	92 50
Maharashtra	*	*	20 20	68 40
Manipur	*	*	36 20	55 70
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0	0
Orissa	*	44 80	76 50	93 40
Punjab	*	*	41 10	70 10
Rajasthan	20 90	86 20	68 00	98 00
Sikkim	**	*	64 70	79 00
Tamil Nadu	*	*	43 40	65 10
Tripura	*	23 10	83 70	81 50
Uttar Pradesh	17 20	74 70	60 90	94 60
West Bengal	18 80	59 80	77 90	90 90

SOURCE Selected Education statistics-1979-80 Planning, Monitoring & Statistics Division, Ministry of Education & Culture, Department of Education Govt of India 1981

0 Data Not Available

* Enrolment Exceed 100% in this age-group indicates that children belonging to higher age-group are enrolled at this level

Wastage, Dropout and Retention

Besides low enrolment and literacy rates, another indicator of the educational backwardness among Scheduled Caste students is their heavy drop out rate. Tables 5 and 6 present the data on the retention rate among general students and Scheduled Caste students at Primary level and Middle school level. This evidence shows that dropout rate is much higher at the Primary stage. A comparison of drop out rate between general students and Scheduled Caste students indicates a higher rate among the latter.

Table 5
RATE OF RETENTION AT PRIMARY STAGE

Co-Horts	General Students			SC Students		
	Enrolment in Class I of the Base Year (Lakhs)	Enrolment Class V After Four Years (Lakhs)	Retention Rate %	Enrolment in class I of the Base Years (Lakhs)	Enrolment in Class V after four Years (Lakhs)	Retention Rate %
1967-68 to 1971-72	162 80	57 41	35 3	23 87	6 63	27 8
1968-69 to 1972-73	162 62	60 03	36 9	24 73	7 13	28 8
1969-70 to 1973-74	163 47	62 07	38.0	24 95	7 75	30 3
1970-71 to 1974-75	167 11	64 55	38 6	25 20	7 92	31 4
1971-72 to 1975-76	171 49	67 06	39 1	26 55	8 55	32 2
1972-73 to 1976-77	179 05	69 48	38 8	27 88	9 34	33 5
1973-74 to 1977-78	173 74	70 27	40 5	28 18	10 04	35 6

SOURCE Trends of Educational Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India 1967-68 to 1977-78

Table 6
RETENTION RATE AT MIDDLE STAGE

Co-Horts	General Students			Scheduled Caste Students		
	Enrolment in Class VI of the Base year (Lakhs)	Enrolment in Class VIII after two years (Lakhs)	Retention Rate %	Enrolment in Class VI of the Base year (Lakhs)	Enrolment in Class VIII after two years (Lakhs)	Retention Rate %
1967-68 to 1969-70	40 86	32 09	78 5	4 55	3 15	69 2
1968-69 to 1970-71	43 16	33 22	77.0	4 57	3 27	71 5
1969-70 to 1971-72	44 25	34 03	76 9	4 71	3 33	70 7
1970-71 to 1972-73	45 53	34 99	76 9	4 82	3 53	73 2
1971-72 to 1973-74	46 80	35 97	76 9	4 86	3 52	72 4
1972-73 to 1974-75	49 15	37 26	75 8	5 16	3 76	72 8
1973-74 to 1975-76	51 39	39 09	76 1	5 41	4 05	74 9
1974-75 to 1976-77	53 83	39 83	74 0	5 83	4 38	75 1
1975-76 to 1977-78	54 38	41 05	75 5	6 24	4 76	76 3

SOURCE Trends of Educational Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India, 1967-68 to 1977-78

It has been suggested that these trends in literacy among the scheduled castes can be attributed to the following factors

"The most dominating factor relates to the poverty condition and economic hardship of the Harijan families, need to engage child power in domestic services or in gainful employment. Inability to meet the educational expenses and helplessness with regard to the provision of basic physical needs are the indicators of educational backwardness of the Harijan families. The next important reason for school drop out stems from schools and school related factors. Domestic exigencies like sickness or death in the family or long illness of the school going child formed the third important category of drop out reasons" ¹⁹

That poverty and economic backwardness of the scheduled castes are the main reasons for this state of affairs should be fairly obvious

Acknowledgement to Meera Velayudhan for comments on the first draft of this paper

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- 2 Ranadive, B T, "Caste, Class and Property Relation", *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 1979
- 3 *Ibid*
4. Keer, D, *Mahatma Jyotirao Phule-The Father of Our Social Revolution*, Popular, Bombay 1964
- 5 Harold R Issac, *India's Ex-untouchables*, Asia Publishing, Delhi, 1965
- 6 Keer, D *Op Cit*
- 7 Selections from the records of Government of India, Home Department No LXXVI, Calcutta, Government of India Printing, 1870
- 8 *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, 1882-83
- 9 Arthur Mayhew, *The Education of India*, Fabian and Gwyer, London 1926
- 10 *Ibid*
- 11 Article 46 (Part-IV) under Directive Principles of State Policy
- 12 *First Five Year Plan*, 1951-56, Planning Commission, Government of India
- 13 Article 17 of the Constitution of India
- 14 *Report of the Backward Class Commission*, Vol 1, Government of India, 1955
- 15 *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, 1964-66
- 16 *Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85*, Planning Commission, Government of India
- 17 Constituted by Planning Commission in July 1980, submitted its report in September/October 1980
- 18 Enrolment Ratio
= $\frac{\text{Enrolment of Scheduled Caste Students on rolls}}{\text{Population of Scheduled Caste in corresponding age group}} \times 100$

- 19 Study on "School Dropout among Scheduled Caste Children Causes and Cure" conducted by Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Cooperation in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, 1975

The New Education Policy : A Class Necessity

IT IS NECESSARY to dispel a wrong impression often observed among academicians that the education policy of a nation is framed by the educationists alone. On the contrary, an education policy to be adopted by the State emerges out of the immediate class needs of the ruling classes. The task of drafting that policy is, of course, left to the educationists and ideologues of the ruling party. This truth has to be borne in mind when we discuss the proposed new education policy of the Government of India. Besides, the education policy has to be considered along with the socio-economic conditions obtaining at a given time.

In each report of the dozens of education commissions, UGC meetings and conferences etc., since independence, there were loud slogans of mass education, education related to life and social production, cultural-spiritual development of the individuals, linkage between manual and mental labour and so on. The national education policy adopted in 1968 also envisaged these ideals. But all these pious formulations have remained on paper and the loud slogans proved deceptive. On the one hand, the outlay and expenditure on education have gradually declined in the successive plans (First Plan, 7.2 per cent of the GNP, Sixth Plan, 2.6 per cent) and the constitutional directive to achieve free and compulsory education for all children in the 6-14 years age group has been abandoned. On the other hand, there has been greater and greater centralization of education culminating in transfer of education from the State List to the Concurrent List of the Constitution during the dark days of Emergency. Effective decentralisation of educational policy implementations in order to achieve rapid and uniform spread of education in such a country of vast cultural-lingual varieties as well as regional imbalances, has been totally ignored. The necessity to keep up the policy of 'divide and rule' through sustenance of regional imbalances and people's backwardness is readily understandable.

In an attempt to further influence the educational processes effectively, the set of guidelines and suggestions apparently constituting the New Education Policy (NEP) present certain striking new features. Before we spell out these, it would, however, be naive to think that the ruling classes can forever remain indifferent towards the present stage of drift and ad-hocism. Education, while increasing the productive capacity of an individual, also raises his consciousness and social awareness. Spread of education, howsoever unplanned, aimless and limited, has certainly made a large section of the

educated disillusioned with the capitalist path of development being pursued. These sections are gradually joining the left and democratic movement in search of an alternative to the present system of exploitation of man by man. This trend threatens the very survival of the ruling classes. Further, the crisis-ridden economy controlled by them cannot absorb the turnout of educated manpower and investments made by the State towards education do not yield profitable returns. Hence the necessity to have a new education policy that protects the needs of the ruling classes and strengthens their position economically, organisationally, politically and ideologically is not difficult to understand.

The salient features of the NEP as envisaged in the document "Challenge of Education" are the following:

i) the words 'free' and 'compulsory' are dropped in the scheme of 'universal elementary education' (Section 4.72)

ii) restricting education after class VIII to only the 'most meritorious' students and their nurture in model schools/centres of excellence, the rest of the students are to be sent to vocational streams, non-formal education and open universities (4.23)

iii) the "most meritorious" students in higher education shall acquire knowledge and skills for assimilating the 'continuing revolution in the world of technology', meaning thereby, high technology as developed in Western Europe, USA and Japan (1.2 & 4.1)

iv) use of high technology devices for 'distance teaching' methods (whereupon the electronic teacher shall substitute the class-room teacher) (4.33-4.36)

v) delinking of jobs from degrees (in order to do away with the problem of providing jobs to the educated unemployed and to further legitimise corruption and nepotism of the employers) (4.84)

vi) total centralisation of all educational matters, national core curriculum

vii) de-affiliation of the colleges, code of conduct for teachers as envisaged in the "Hospitals and Other Institutions Bill", new management pattern in colleges and universities along the line of Central University Acts, curb on all political and other trade union rights in the name of de-politicisation of the campus (4.130-4.133 & 4.135)

viii) allocation of resources (presently less than a percent of the union budget) not to be increased, privatisation of educational institutions (4.45 & 4.69), mobilization of voluntary agencies for implementation of educational policies (4.81)

ix) complete moratorium on opening of new colleges and universities or new courses in the existing ones (4.123), withdrawal of all subsidies for higher education other than that for research (4.134)

These policy prescriptions have emerged out of the contemporary needs of the ruling classes. In the face of the economic crisis, the government has

adopted a strategy of relying heavily on import of western technology in order to minimise cost of production and maintain high rates of profit. Ever since the new Government of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was formed, this reliance on high technology and its inflow from the imperialist camp has assumed dramatic proportions. The budget for 1985-86, the liberalisation of controls on imports, grant of unprecedented concessions to the private sector, an open door policy to the multinational corporations and the document of the Seventh Plan (1985-90) all reflect this strategy. In the name of rapid modernisation of the economy and march towards the 21st century with dignity and "alleviation of poverty", a virtual repudiation of national self-reliance is evident in the new policy shifts.

The new economic policies adopted by the Union Government will create a need for the manpower capable of manning the industries as well as agriculture based upon the input of imported technology. It is, therefore, aimed at producing "sophisticated manpower in adequate numbers to deal creatively with new technologies" (4 144). In other words, only the 'employables' in the given economic structure. The investments are termed 'productive' in that sense only. The New Education Policy is geared towards this end. It is, in fact, a strategy that requires a small number of intellectual manpower trained in modern methods while the vast masses can remain illiterate and at best half-educated. The fate of the majority cannot be anything else because, in the absence of employment opportunities, vocationalisation of education in the secondary stage and afterwards, becomes infructuous. Very few people would be drawn towards it. Similarly, interest in non-formal and continuing education facilities also cannot be generated unless there are scopes for gainful employment. What is of greater concern is that non-formal education is driven towards replacing formal education although it should be no more than a support programme. In the name of 'human resource development' (a catchy slogan indeed), the vast majority of students are to be thrown into a blind alley while only a select few are to be imparted the best possible education, knowledge and skills corresponding to the needs of the existing economic system. This policy would, therefore, further accentuate the elitism already present in our educational system and society.

It may be relevant, at this stage, to refer to the Seventh Plan (1985-90) document adopted by the Peoples Republic of China. The government of the PRC has embarked on a path of rapid modernisation of the country in all possible respects in order to transform itself into a developed socialist state by the end of the century. It has been stated that "economic construction, social development and scientific and technological progress depend on further growth of education based on economic development" and, therefore, "in the next five years, universities and colleges will turn out 2.6 million graduates through regular or special college courses, 70 per cent more than covered by Sixth Plan, and 200,000 through P.G. courses, an increase of more than 400 per cent. China needs to train two million specialised personnel with cultural, scientific and technological quali-

fications at or above the level of graduates from technical colleges, a growth of 150 per cent over the Sixth Plan period (Planning—released by the embassy of the PRC, New Delhi, October 9, 1985) An all out effort for realising rapid agricultural and industrial growth coupled with modernisation in methods of production has been organically linked with spread of higher education both in terms of quality and quantity Socialist China has no unemployment problem and hence the population (one billion) is regarded as an asset for the socialist modernisation of the country

It is in this context that the new educational policy for the People's Republic of China was made public on May 27, 1985 The document was a decision of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee on the reform of the educational system and was formulated on the basis of an exhaustive study by over 10,000 experts The draft policy was revised eleven times before it was finally released The three-part plan calls for (i) a more rapid expansion of the 9-year compulsory school system (ii) the extension of secondary technical education and (iii) more autonomy for colleges and universities (Educational Reforms, issued by the Information Office of the Embassy of PRC, New Delhi, January 25, 1986)

In a single year 1984, institutes of higher learning enrolled 23,000 postgraduates, 7000 more than in 1983 There were 57,000 postgraduates studying in the country—20,000 more than the previous year Universities and colleges enrolled 4,75,000 students in 1984, 84,000 more than in 1983, These institutes had a total student body of 1,396,000 in 1984—1,98,000 more than in 1983 In 1984, there were 2,87,000 students graduates from these colleges The total student body in adult higher education institutions (including TV and Radio College courses, correspondence courses, evening schools and part-time colleges for workers, peasants, managerial personnel and middle-school teachers) was 1,292,000 in 1984—3,66,000 more than the year before The number of students enrolled in the secondary schools, middle and primary schools, agricultural middle schools, vocational middle schools and workers' training schools as well as their output also increased substantially in each year of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1981-85) overfulfilling targets (Communique on fulfillment of China's Economic and Social Development Plan, Information office, Embassy of the PRC, New Delhi, April 22, 1985 Also see News From China, No 42, October 8, 1985)

Thus we see that in China, development of human resources means development of productivity of every individual through education, training and employment while in India, it means restriction of education to a select few, the 'employables' in a decadent capitalist economy Education in India is being converted into a process of churning out trained technicians to be productively employed to give instant private returns to the employers An approach like this will neither develop the vast human resources that exist nor will it accelerate economic growth and all-round modernisation in the long run

No one can deny the necessity of a thorough restructuring of the present

educational system. But it needs to be remembered that such changes cannot be brought about without changes in the total socio-economic structure itself. The framers of the document 'Challenge of Education' cannot be unaware of this. It is true that 'Challenge of Education' does highlight many of the maladies. But it only raises questions and avoids its solution under the cover of mere slogans. It is also full of contradictions. For example, the crowding in of institutions of higher learning has been discussed at length. It is true that many students join colleges and universities because they have nowhere else to go. But should we only blame these people and call them crowds? Had there been employment opportunities for undergraduates and graduates, the so-called crowding would have disappeared. However, it is also true that only about 4.8 per cent of our population in the age group 19-21 years (3.31) receive higher education and that enrolment in higher education increased only at the rate of 3.8 per cent in the seventies as compared to 13.4 per cent in the sixties (2.14). Hence, the so-called 'crowding' is primarily due to the highly inadequate number of institutions for higher learning as well as lack of employment opportunities. The document does not say a word about the failure of the political and economic system to create jobs for our young people but, on the contrary, it chooses the easy way out by condemning these people as "unemployables" and hold the unemployed themselves responsible for their plight (3.63 & 4.83). It also suggests a complete moratorium on opening of new colleges and universities other than the 'centres for excellence'.

The new education policy, therefore, is an eloquent manifestation of the contemporary needs of the ruling classes and reflects the bankrupt path of development pursued by them. The policy of restricting education in itself and the series of proposals attacking the democratic rights of the academic community pose a big danger to the democratic movement. This danger has to be properly understood particularly since it is being camouflaged under populist slogans of modernisation and preparing the country for the 21st century. Education for all, jobs for all; free and compulsory education till secondary stage, state take over of private education, education in mother tongue at all levels, placing education on the state list, higher allocation of resources for education (at least 6 per cent of GNP, 10 per cent of Union Budget, 30 per cent of State Budget and 10 per cent of Plan expenditure)—these requirements should be the basis of an alternative education policy.

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The Significance Of DUTA Strike

THE DELHI University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has, over the years, come to occupy an important place in the teachers movement in the country. Partly, this is a reflection of the public visibility of happenings in the Capital, what goes unnoticed in a district town can create waves in the Capital. Again, Delhi University itself has developed a reputation of sorts, if not for scholarship alone, at least for holding examinations in time and sending a large number of its students into the civil service, finance and business and this reputation has given the Teachers' Association some measure of credibility and bargaining power. Also, the University's own special history—the fact that its colleges are constituents of the University and every college teacher too is recognised as a teacher of the University—has given a specific character to the unity of college and departmental teachers and inculcated a commitment to the 'federal' structure of the University and to parity between University and college teachers.

Over the years, the teachers movement in the University has come to be recognised as one of the leading segments of the democratic movement. The DUTA has, to its credit, the distinction of being one of the first associations to draw public attention to and agitate on issues like the Hospital & Other Institutions Bill, the UGC's Central Universities Review Committee's (CURC) Report, the 'New Education Policy' etc.

Given this background, and given also the fact that DUTA's strike (December 10, 1985 to February 26, 1986) coincided with the government sponsored and manipulated 'debate' on the New Education Policy, it is hardly surprising that the DUTA's strike has been seen as a foretaste of the forthcoming battles over education policy. That the teachers have come out of the strike stronger than before, more militant than before and with greater public sympathy than before, is a good augury for the day to come.

There were two key demands of the strike, the full and complete honouring of the 1983 agreement (arrived at in January 1983 after a prolonged 109 days strike) and initiation of decisive steps towards democratisation of the University.

The four points of the January 1983 Agreement were a) a continuing quota free merit promotion scheme b) housing schemes c) stagnation removal for selection grade teachers and d) introduction of professor's grade

in colleges. Of the four points, only one, relating to merit promotion had been implemented till December 1985. With regard to the other three, though the University bodies had gone through all the formalities, implementation was nowhere in sight, though three years had elapsed.

As far as democratisation was concerned, the University's own Executive Council had formed a committee headed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the committee had submitted a *unanimous interim report*. Yet, within the framework of the new policies for 'de-politicization', for the replacement of the election principle by the nomination principle (as far as membership of university bodies was concerned)—these interim recommendations were unacceptable.

Essentially, therefore, none of the teachers' demands were new. Everyone of them had the sanction of university bodies and moreover, the 1983 Agreement had the concurrence of the UGC and the Ministry of Education as well.

Numerous delegations and letters to the authorities had failed to produce any results. At no stage was the question raised as to the scope and validity of the 1983 Agreement, always, there was the talk of unfortunate delay and promise of speedy implementation. Yet, suddenly, the merit promotion scheme, which had in the course of implementation been included in the Delhi University statute book as part of teachers' service conditions, was withdrawn through a circular from the UGC. Teachers saw this as the final insult. The authorities were clearly violating the 1983 Agreement and throwing into doubt the very credibility of the DUTA. Teachers demanded full implementation of the 1983 Agreement and resolution of other outstanding issues.

The DUTA strike went on for 75 days—from December 10, 1985 to February 22, 1986. It attracted wide public attention and received prime-time TV coverage (biased no doubt) on at least three occasions. All prominent newspapers carried editorials, some of them more than once during the strike. Trade unions, Public Sector employees associations, and of course, teachers associations from all over India expressed solidarity and undertook protest actions. The students, despite the manipulations of the ruling party, remained, by and large, with the teachers, even courting arrest with them when the need arose.

The strike went through two clearly demarcated phases—the first from December 10, 1985 to January 22, 1986 and the second from January 22, 1986 to February 22, 1986.

Since all other forms of appeal had failed, the DUTA general body meeting of September 29, 1985 demanded "concrete and specific steps" for meeting unfulfilled promises and clearly told the authorities that if such measures were not taken, teachers would have "no option but to take recourse to direct action". After waiting for more than two months and seeing that nothing was being done to implement the 1983 Agreement, the General Body of the DUTA decided to start an indefinite strike from December 10, 1985.

After more than a month's struggle, it had become clear by the third week of January that, of the points of the 1983 Agreement, a solution had been worked out on three. But the UGC had refused to actually consider the question of professors' grade, they only promised they would only if the strike was withdrawn. On the demand for democratization, only some general promises were made. To this was added an unmistakable threat, if the teachers continued their strike, they would be crushed.

The authorities began an unprecedented offensive against the teachers. The view point of the VC and the UGC received wide coverage in the television. It was only later that the news media fully supported the teachers' position through editorials and articles.

On February 22, 1986, having demonstrated its strength, having withstood the authorities' offensive, the DUTA decided to withdraw its strike so as to save the students from losing an academic year and in order to preserve the precious unity of the organisation. DUTA finalised its programme for making up the loss of teaching days. This was then passed by the University Academic Council on February 26, 1986.

What the Strike has Achieved

The teachers have established the truthfulness of their case. They have proved their concern for education as well as their commitment to their organisation.

During the first phase, by January 22, 1986, they had obtained written commitments that the merit promotion scheme would continue, that the housing scheme would be passed, that selection grade teachers would get relief, that the UGC contribution to the University's revolving fund for house building advances would be enhanced from Rs 50 lakhs per year to Rs 1 crore per year, that committees would be set up on problems related to research, to temporary teachers and on extending university rules to professional colleges, that the time-limit for acquiring Ph. D/M Phil would be raised from 8 years to 10 years.

Yet, in retrospect, the biggest achievements came, not in the first, but in the second phase of the strike. It was in this phase that the DUTA matured as an organisation, that the teachers' fighting capacity was put to test, that the real issues of the strike and of the struggles to come, came into the limelight.

Teachers are often portrayed as weak, disorganised and incapable of struggle. This strike has exposed that kind of propaganda. Despite the repression unleashed by the authorities, the teachers held on. They preserved the unity of their organisation and they withdrew their strike of their own choice, in good order.

The strike has also shown that, despite their hypocritical talk about teachers being "gurus" and "nation-builders", the authorities have the same approach to teachers' struggle as they do to the struggles of other sections of the working people. Every possible weapon was used against the teachers,

ranging from misinformation and slander to threats and repression. It is even more important to note that such tactics were really stepped up after January 22, 1986 when, more clearly than before, DUTA's demands were linked with the growing opposition to the New Education Policy. DUTA's strike has shown that new education policies are indeed underway and that these policies will be the focal points for the teachers' and students' struggles of the days to come.

Since the Central Government has declared its intention of placing the 'New Education Policy' in its final form during the current session of Parliament, since one key element in that policy, namely the Mehrotra Pay Committee Report is likely to be available in late April or early May, it is vital that the issues raised by DUTA's strike be clearly understood —

It has become clear that in the eyes of the authorities, university autonomy is an 'outmoded' concept. The CURC Report had referred to university autonomy as an anomalous remnant of our colonial past. In the new scheme of things, university bodies will be of no consequence, all decisions of any significance will be taken by the UGC.

There is to be no extension of democratic participation in decision making, on the contrary, the new policy seeks to bind the teachers hand and foot, to deprive them of their freedom of expression, of association and of protest. This is evident from the multi-pronged official propaganda about depoliticization and the need for a teachers' code of conduct. The National Commission on Teachers and the CURC have both set out a code of conduct and these ideas have been given a green signal in the August 1985 document 'Challenge of Education'.

Comprehensive central legislation on the lines of the CURC is in the offing. The aim is to do away with elections to university bodies, instead, nominations are to be resorted to. This became clear from DUTA's talks with the former UGC Chairperson on January 10, 1986.

The entire structure of university and college functioning will be sought to be changed. The 'Challenge' document had only repeated the old complaints about Universities growing under the weight of the colleges. It had also claimed that the system of affiliated colleges itself was an anomalous one, another remnant from the colonial past. Now the Central Government's thinking has taken a quantum jump. The Education Ministry's 'Discussion Paper' presented at the State Education Ministers Conference on January 23-24, 1986, states that universities will not even remain examining bodies. Instead, colleges are to evaluate and give degrees to their own students, with the 'market' deciding on the relative weight and significance of different colleges' degrees. The vital link between undergraduate and post-graduate education is to be snapped.

College governing bodies and trusts are to be given all rights to hire and fire. Various University rules protecting teachers security of service are to be abolished. The ground is thus to be prepared for a full scale privatisation of

higher education. The parity between lecturers and Class I government servants in regard to pay scales, HRA, CCA and Interim Relief is to be done away with wherever it exists. The UGC's withdrawal of bonus from Delhi teachers in December 1985 makes this abundantly clear.

Teachers will have to submit themselves to confidential reports and regular eight yearly scrutiny. The purpose is that "recalcitrant element" should be deprived of pay increments to keep them in line. The crossing of these efficiency bars will be called "*vertical mobility*". DUTA's strike has shown that this will be one of the key issues in the days to come in all colleges and universities. This concept will be used to deprive teachers of their hard won right to promotion, those who have been promoted to the teachers grade will stand to be demoted, and this concept will be used to destroy the parity between university and college teachers.

Talk of improvement in teaching and research is a mere smokescreen. This is evident from the way in which the government rejected DUTA's eminently sensible and academically sound demand for the introduction of Professors' Grade in colleges. The introduction of such a grade would have been a great incentive, a fine method of encouraging and nurturing talent, yet it was not found acceptable. The authorities have referred the Professors Grade issue to the Mehrotra Committee but the official comments are enough to indicate that all they intend is to bury the Professors Grade demand.

Fundamentally, the DUTA strike has shown that in the eyes of the authorities, education is not a right, higher education is not a facility, the opportunity for which should be equally available to all citizens. Rather, for the authorities, higher education is a burden which should, as speedily as possible, be shifted into the more 'efficient' private sector. And the private sector will be given a free hand to fleece the people through higher fees, capitation fees etc. Except in those highly specialised, exclusive, technical areas which will produce the manpower necessary for the new administrative, technical and management structure, in all other areas, higher education will be curtailed. The products are, after all, in the language of the "Challenge", "unemployables". These changes are bound to affect not only the teachers but all sections of Indian people. The educational system will face its greatest challenge in the history of independent India.

The teachers movement in Delhi has come out of this strike far stronger, united and determined than ever before. But, most of all, it has become far more aware of the challenges it faces. If DUTA's strike has played a role in creating this awareness not only in Delhi University but also in other Universities and among the people at large, this itself should be counted as the biggest achievement of the struggle.

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Student Movement and Education Policy

AT FIRST sight, the post-independence student movement in India presents an extremely fragmented and incoherent picture. The unity of the student community that was achieved in the struggle against the imperialist plunderers of this country, appears to lie in shambles. Though the original AISF, which was founded in 1936 had undergone a couple of splits prior to Independence, particularly during the 1942 Quit India movement, it still remained the premier student organisation.

With the removal of the main target of this movement, namely British imperialism, from the scene and with the crystallization of different political trends, the student movement, too, went into disarray. The "sacred duty"¹ of fighting British imperialism, as Nehru had called it, had come to an end. Independence raised new hopes, new expectations.

Though Nehru's "sacred duty" theory had been decisively rejected by a big section of students who had come to the conclusion that there can be no genuine freedom without socialism, yet even among them, confusion started gaining ground. Was Nehru a progressive? Was he really intending to build socialism, as the Avadi Session of the Congress had declared? Was the path of heavy industrialisation through the public sector, really intended to build socialism? A section of the left, within the student movement too, started wavering. From this point onwards, the student movement as such became enmeshed in numerous controversies and started searching for a new direction. Here, it would not be out of place to mention that it was through successive disillusionments with the Gandhian leadership of the Indian National Congress (INC)—its reluctance to raise the slogan of complete Independence, its vacillation during the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements—that large sections of the youth realized that complete Independence is not what the INC is interested in. They had also realized that only socialism could guarantee full independence. The record of the Congress leaders and their attitudes towards students, after they entered ministries in 1937, further added to this belief.²

The developments of the period following the attainment of Independence brought before the democratic student movement, another important question. Socialism is all right, but how is it to be attained? Through collaboration with the Nehru government or through a relentless struggle against it, shoulder to shoulder with the working class, peasantry and other

toiling sections ? Needless to say, these controversies were not confined merely to the students. The entire left movement, the communist movement in particular, was debating these issues.

For almost two decades, when the democratic student movement was thus engaged in re-charting out its future course and perspective through bitter controversy and struggle, the ruling classes were sharpening their ideological weapons and sermonizing the students to eschew all politics, study and join the new 'sacred' task of nation building.

The mid-sixties were a tumultuous period in contemporary Indian history. An unprecedented economic crisis, characterised by industrial recession, food shortage with near famine conditions faced the country. Mass outbursts of anger, demonstrations for food, strikes, bandhs, involving several crore people, broke out. Students assumed their rightful place and at many times were in the forefront of the struggle. Police repression, lathi charges, firing could not deter them. The following reports present a scenario of resistance and struggle.

"Students, except those who are sent to expensive public schools, are faced with overcrowded classes, not enough classrooms and playgrounds, not enough teachers, and those who are ill-paid. Increasing tuition fees and text book prices have created a situation in which students are finding that their guardians are more and more unable to give them education."³

"Students are coming forward to champion the cause of the people and suffer for it. In Assam and Bengal, they were shot down for supporting the popular demand for food, in U P, they were repressed for demonstrating their solidarity with the employees of the state government."⁴

In Andhra, for seven days continuously, a massive unsurge shook the state. Demanding that the fifth Steel Plant be installed in Vishakhapatnam, since Andhra was an industrially neglected state, students took to the streets. For seven days, all schools and colleges remained closed.⁵

This upsurge of the mid-sixties, perhaps, clarified the doubts of many who still thought that the Congress was serious about a 'socialistic pattern of society'.

It is from this period onwards that one perceives a new trend in the organized democratic student movement which began to discuss and agitate on issues related to education policy. More specifically, towards the end of the decade and with the formation of the Student Federation of India (SFI) on an all-India basis, meeting a historical necessity, serious efforts were made in formulating a new approach towards education policy in India. This is not to deny the good work of the regional Students' Federations. For example, the 12th state conference of UPSF held on 12-13 June '66, passed a resolution condemning the Indo-U S Education Foundation, calling on students to resist it. The 19th Bengal Pradesh SF State Conference held in 25-28 December 1967 in Siliguri demanded a truly democratic and production oriented education system, an extension of the U.F. Government's policy of free

education upto class VIII to the secondary stage, student representation in governing bodies of Colleges and University senates, and so on—but the major pre-occupation was of resolving the most important question on which depended everything else, including the approach to the education policy

It is perhaps relevant to emphasise that the student movement, by its very nature, differs from the movement of basic classes—the working class or the peasantry. This difference is due to the simple fact that the students are not a class. Whereas the working class or the peasantry as a class has its own demands—economic and political, the case with a multi-class group like students is entirely different.

It is for this reason that while there may exist pro-ruling class organisations and trade unions among the workers and peasants, they can hardly ignore some of the basic demands of the particular class. Thus the INTUC, or BMS too may be dragged into united actions where basic class demands are concerned. The situation is slightly more complex in the kisan movement where, as a result of the differentiation among the peasantry, one 'peasant' organisation may differ from another. Thus, a kisan organization of say the Lok Dal or Sharad Joshi's Shetkari Sangathan may in fact represent a different strata and class interests than the AIKS or the AIAWU. However, some scope still exists for an all-in peasant unity since the common exploitation of the peasantry by the landlord *does* offer the basis for a common movement. This was particularly true at the time of independence when a wider basis for an all-in unity existed. Thus, while the Telengana armed struggle or the Tebhaga struggle could force some policy matters to the fore and place '*land reform*' on the agenda, the united working class could beat back the offensive of say, the Industrial Relations Bill.

In the case of the student movement, however, debates, protests and struggles have had a more sporadic and spontaneous character. It is true, though, that there are some common demands of the student community too, e.g. the demand for free and compulsory education, expansion of facilities, syllabi and examination reform etc. But these too are questions which students who have entered education are not so acutely or directly affected by. It requires a certain amount of democratic consciousness, a minimum political awareness to be inculcated, before any real movement can be built around them. Here, the question of the forms of struggle is also important. It would be a serious mistake to think that a strike action by the working class or agricultural workers is in any way comparable to a strike action by students.

For reasons already mentioned, namely, the fact that they constitute the basic classes, the working class and the peasantry have a certain clout. When the working class goes on strike in any industry—it means a loss to the capitalists in sheer economic terms, or to the landlord when his labourers refuse to work—it is an expression of the class struggle. Not so with the principal of a college or a university Vice-Chancellor.

The multi-class student community, on the contrary, represents an extremely volatile section, receptive to all sorts of ideas and ideals. It, therefore, often reacts more to purely political issues with great fervour. Students are as easily drawn into a revolutionary upsurge, as the experience of student demonstrations in Russia or the historic anti-imperialist May 4th movement of China demonstrate, as they are drawn into fascist movements, as in the case of the Hitler Youth Movement. The Soweto Student uprising of 1976 or the recent student upsurges against the ruling fascist clique of South Korea amply demonstrate this truth. Nearer home, the massive student upsurge in Bangladesh in 1983 or earlier on, in the 1951 language movement, too, were inspired more by the Bengali nationalist sentiment against the Islamization of education and for the recognition of Bengali as a state language.

The experience of our country, too, is not very different. The upsurge of the mid-sixties only further illustrates this basic fact. So do the Nav Nirman agitation of Gujarat and the JP led movement in Bihar, which were directed mainly against price-rise and corruption. This same student community which has these glorious struggles (albeit with limitations regarding the perspective) to its credit, can also play an altogether different role. It can, with equal ease, form the platform—rather, a reactionary platform, of Assamese national chauvinism like the AASU in the latter part of the seventies or of Khalistani ideology like the AISSF (though its leadership may not really be students, it does draw support from the student and youth). The fact that the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat also began from the campuses is not a coincidence.

This long diversion, in our discussion, was necessitated by the need to highlight a distinctive trait of the student community. For it is an analysis of this that must form the basis of any scientific attempt at studying the history of the student movement. It was an historic occasion when the Bengal Provincial Students' Federation (BPSF), the most influential students organisation in West Bengal, took the initiative and issued an appeal in Mid-1970 for the formation of an all-India organisation. A draft programme was adopted by the SFI at its founding conference in Trivandrum in December 1970. This programme summed up the historical experience of the Indian student movement. It seriously attempted to grapple with the problems of the education system and policy. Steering clear of the issue-based or often non-issue based, sporadic politics that had so far dominated the post-Independence scenario, the Programme stated,

“The Students' Federation of India realises the urgent necessity of overhauling the present education system and developing a scientific and democratic system of education.”

For the first time a comprehensive charter of demands was placed before the students. On all important questions like free and compulsory education upto the secondary stage, recognition of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction, scrapping of the three language formula, syllabi

reform, examination reform, democratic rights and participation of students in decision-making bodies, opposition to private stranglehold over education, inadequate allocation of funds and interference of the Central Government in education and so on, the programme, unequivocally gave a scientific direction.⁷ While dealing with the education system, it also clearly stated that "The student movement constitutes a current and a component part of the wider democratic movement of the workers and peasants and other progressive forces."⁸

The formation of the SFI thus was a historic turning point, in this respect. The next four years, till the second SFI conference held in Calcutta, constitute a period of intense struggle to put this programme into practice. The huge demonstration in Kerala in November 1971 against striking down of important clauses in the University Act passed by the United Front Government, involved tens of thousands of students. Struggles demanding cancellation of SSLC examination fees, abolition of capitation fees, radical syllabus reforms, prevention of police from entering colleges were carried out.⁹

In Tamil Nadu's Annamalai University, in Andhra, Orissa, Tripura, Bihar, Assam, Punjab and Karnataka, struggles were conducted on various problems of the student community.¹⁰ The demands ranged from opening of more colleges, increase in teaching staff, in Tripura, to arresting price rise, exemption of fees for students from drought-affected or flood-affected areas in Assam and Tripura and so on. Institution-based struggles were also initiated during this period. Cheaper education, cheap books, cheap kerosene—all these were demands that directly flowed from the policy perspective of the organisation. It is not possible here to catalogue all the struggle on various political, anti-authoritarian and anti-imperialist issues. Suffice it to say that important struggles did take place.

While this was the picture in the rest of the country, the democratic movement and naturally, the democratic student movement in West Bengal too faced serious attacks. Naked semi-fascist terror was unleashed. The Congress-Naxalite attacks on the 'bourgeois education system' vitiated all normal academic atmosphere in the state. Democratic rights were abrogated, students unions captured by anti-socials, attacks on libraries, laboratories and even on teachers and students activists became a daily phenomenon. 'Mass copying is our birthright' became the Congress hoodlums' slogan. Amidst threats of physical liquidation, SFI stood in defense of education. Fight against anarchy in education became a key task. It is not only today, when the Left Front Government is in office that SFI is 'by proxy' defending normalcy on campuses—as many would seem to think. It all began then. It flowed from the programmatic understanding of the SFI. It was during this period that the SFI in August 1973 built up a big struggle in West Bengal against the irrational syllabus proposed by the Congress Government. In 1974, a 72-hour all Bengal student strike was a historical event, in that period of terror.

The second All-India Conference of the SFI held in January, 1974,

adopted a resolution on "Mass Education" This resolution further concretized the stand on policy issues and even presented an alternative policy This comprehensive resolution was not merely a critique of the education policy of the ruling classes but also represented a reaction of the democratic student movement to the Draft Fifth Plan and the place given to education in it Much of what is now coming in the garb of the 'new' education policy was contained in an embryo in the Fifth Plan draft e.g. 'model schools' and the parallel stream of education for the elite ¹¹ While this resolution presented an alternative, it also cautioned about some serious trends which turned out to be prophetic ¹

"The Central Government wants to keep its dominance over university education by keeping a large percentage of finances in its hands and distribute through UGC, to its favourite institutions It wants to concentrate on post-graduate research scholars and to develop a few selected colleges and university centres to get the necessary cadres for its administrative and capitalist apparatus" ¹²

This resolution became literally a weapon of the democratic student movement—a guide for struggle

The imposition of internal emergency in 1975 June, saw a change in the form of the movement and its struggles Within severe limitations and amidst repression, the SFI carried forward its struggle in new forms to suit the changed situation. ¹⁶

Among the major attacks on education during the emergency was the placing of education on the Concurrent list—thus opening the way for open and blatant interference by the Centre

The withdrawal of the Emergency and the installation of the Janata Government in 1977, on the crest of a popular anti-authoritarian upsurge, opened up new possibilities of struggle The demands for dismantling the authoritarian structure built up by the Congress, and withdrawal of all the black measures became the central demands of all democratic forces Opportunities had also opened up to debate afresh the entire education policy Against this background, the SFI took the lead in organising an All-India Convention in Delhi on December 19-20, 1977 Attended by over a thousand delegates from all over the country, the convention demanded that the entire authoritarian framework in education be dismantled, education be restored in the States list, democratic decision making and education through the mother tongue be implemented

With new fervour, the democratic student movement surged ahead Serious attempts were initiated by the SFI to utilize the new situation to draw in other student organisations on the common demands of the student community The Patna Conference of the SFI in February 1979 was a landmark in this respect For the first time after Independence, student and youth organisations of various political tendencies were brought together in an All-India Convention Against Illiteracy and Unemployment, in Delhi on July 22, 1979 The call of the convention was carried to the states State level campaigns and struggles were initiated It is to the credit of the SFI that it played

the key role in involving all shades of political trends on common demands relating to education and unemployment. The turn of the decade saw serious rise of divisive trends amongst the student community in particular, and Indian polity in general. The AASU led-agitation in Assam assumed serious proportions challenging the democratic rights of minorities. Hindu chauvinism and Islamic fundamentalism too, started raising their heads. This was partly evidenced in the Janata Government's bid to withdraw four secular history text books and boost communal historiography. It was also seen later, in the fanatical attacks on the eminent historian, Irfan Habib, by Islamic fundamentalists. The SFI seriously met this challenge, campaigned, demonstrated and emerged as a champion of secularism and democracy.

In this background, the SFI seriously analysed the situation and came to the conclusion that it was the need of the hour to resist these trends by positively putting forward a programme of uniting the student and youth on their common demands. At the initiative of the SFI and DYFI, an All India Student—Youth Action Committee was formed. This was in preparation of the now historic September 15, 1981 Student—Youth rally, in which thousands upon thousands of students and youth marched to Parliament demanding "Jobs for All, Education for All." The struggle against the bankrupt education policy of the government and its wrong priorities (of ignoring mass education) became a mass movement with this action. The slogan "Jobs for All, Education for All" caught the imagination of crores of youth and students, so much so that many other organisations started adopting it.

Today, when the government is talking of a new education policy—a reactionary, anti-people policy, the student movement is facing a most serious challenge. While trying to keep the intelligentsia, students, and teachers busy with a so-called democratic debate, the government is proceeding ahead already and implementing it. This 'policy' which aims at destroying education, which for the first time absolves the government and state of any responsibility of free and universal education, constitutes one of the greatest challenges, not only to the academic community, but to the people at large for those whose children will never be able to enter the highly guarded portals of education and have to be content with watching TV or Video.

But the democratic student movement is taking up the challenge. The SFI has not confined itself to academic debates of this or that proposal of the policy. It has begun a massive campaign in the student community for the coming struggle. In the coming days, the colleges and universities will have to be made the battle ground for offering the stiffest resistance.

Already, the campaign and struggle are warming up. Students are positively responding to this campaign. Even in a state like Delhi with a relatively weaker student movement, the campaign and subsequent demonstration at the Education Ministry and a strike in JNU show that the response is positive. In a state like West Bengal with a strong student movement, the entire student community had observed a statewide strike on

October 10, 1985 Continuous campaigns are on Mass meetings and demonstrations are taking place The response of the student community there is decisively against this reactionary policy So much so, that in the recent elections to college unions, on this one issue, SFI has been able to snatch 21 college unions from the Chhatra Parishad There is no doubt that the student movement will decisively reject this new offensive

- 1 Sunnet Chopra Political Consciousness and Student Movement in India *Social Scientist*, May 1978
- 2 *Ibid*
- 3 *People's Democracy* "Stop this shooting of students", November 6 1966
- 4 *CPI(M) Central Committee Resolution People's Democracy* November 1966
- 5 *People's Democracy* December 11 1966
- 6 *SFI Programme*
- 7 *Ibid* Charter of Demands
- 8 *Ibid*
- 9 M A Babu, Decade of Dedicated Students' Struggles-I, in *Student Struggle*, 1980 Dec-Jan 1981
- 10 *Ibid*
- 11 Kumaresh Chakravorty "Education and Fifth Five Year Plan" *Social Scientist*, October 1972
Madhusudan Chakravorty, Model Schools Objective and Significance" (Bengali) *Ganashakti*, October 4, 1985
- 11 *SFI 2nd Conference Resolution on Mass Education*

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Book Review

Adult Education

COMBATING POVERTY THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION National Development Strategies, CHRIS DUKE (ed), Croom Helm, 1985, pp 255

THIS VOLUME is brought out under the auspices of the International Council for Adult Education, "a non-governmental, voluntary partnership of people and organisations working together to promote the education and the learning of adults for responsible, human-centred social and economic development" ¹ One wonders why such an organisation was necessary, when there is already UNESCO, whose success in the field has reduced both the Reagan Administration and Mrs Thatcher to opting out of that valid international forum

It appears also that the promoters of this forum, with its head-quarters conveniently situated in Canada, are at variance with UNESCO's "concept and target of universal literacy by the year 2000, despite scepticism among its advisers whether this is a realistic platform" ² And in support of its position, it states the conclusions of a West German Agency that has "questioned the commitment to and unintended consequences of mass literacy campaigns" ³

And what is their claim? They say there is no proof that "literacy was historically a prerequisite of economic and social development, that literacy efforts have of themselves diminished exploitation and poverty, that literacy is a prerequisite for the intelligent understanding and handling of life, or that it necessarily and directly relates to attaining participative structures, achieving liberation and abolishing oppression" ⁴

It is obvious that the authors of this conclusion are seeing literacy as divorced from the context in which it is evolving. To keep the debate academic, it would be worthwhile to look at the historical context of literacy and illiteracy as explained by EP Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class*, "Illiteracy, exhaustion, the emigration from the village of the ambitious, the sharp-witted and the young, the shadow of the squire and the parson, the savage punishment of enclosure or bread rioters-all combined to induce fatalism and to inhibit the articulation of grievances" ⁵

On the other hand, while it is obvious that in its earliest and most brutal phase of industrialisation a *particular form of capitalist development based on the unbridled development of individual greed, exploitation and destruction of human beings*

(especially women and children) at the altars of profit, which it is no longer necessary to repeat as the experience of the socialist world clearly shows us, mass literacy may not have kept up with "development" temporarily. Yet a closer analysis demonstrates even that was an illusion fostered by a failure to grasp the totality of the reality of that period.

Thompson points out that even in this brutal phase of the history of capitalist development, the workers held on tenaciously to the fruits of literacy that they were being denied, even by proxy whenever possible. "Given the elementary techniques of literacy, labourers, artisans, shopkeepers, clerks and school-masters, proceeded to instruct themselves, severally or in groups. A shoemaker, who had been taught his letters in the Old Testament, would labour through the *Age of Reason*, a schoolmaster whose education had taken him little further than worthy religious homilies, would attempt Voltaire, Gibbon, Ricardo, here and there, local radical leaders, weavers, booksellers, tailors, would amass shelves of Radical periodicals and learn how to use Parliamentary Blue Books, *illiterate labourers would nevertheless, go each week to a pub where Cobbett's editorial letter was read aloud and discussed*." And this too, in a period "when the formal education of a great part of the people entailed little more than instruction in the Three Rs." ¹⁶

It is precisely through this close connection between the struggle for literacy under developing capitalism and the betterment of the conditions of the masses that the struggle for the freedom of the press comes in, and Thompson points out "There is perhaps no country in the world in which the contest of the rights of the press was so sharp, so emphatically victorious, and so peculiarly identified with the cause of the artisans and labourers. If Peterloo established (by a paradox of feeling) the right of public demonstration, the rights of a "free press" were won in a campaign extending over fifteen or more years which has no comparison for its pig-headed, bloody minded, and indomitable audacity. Carlile (a tinsmith who had nevertheless received a year or two of grammar-school education at Ashburton in Devon) rightly saw that the repression of 1819 made the Rights of the Press the fulcrum of the Radical Movement. But unlike Cobbett and Wooder, who modified their tone to meet the Six Acts in the hope of living to fight another day (and who lost circulation accordingly), Carlile hoisted the black ensign of unqualified defiance and, like a pirate cock-boat, sailed straight into the middle of the combined fleets of the State and Church. As, in the aftermath of Peterloo, he came up for trial (for publishing the Works of Paine), the entire Radical Press saluted his courage, but gave him up for lost. When he finally emerged, after years of imprisonment, the combined fleets were scattered beyond the horizon in disarray. He had exhausted the ammunition of the Government, and turned its *ex officio* informations and special juries into laughing-stocks. He had plainly sunk the private prosecuting societies, the Constitutional Association and the Vice Society, which were supported by the patronage and the subscriptions of the nobility, bishops and Wilberforce." ¹⁷ Thus it is clear that even in the most brutal record of the development of

capitalism that we have, the connection between literacy, progress and civil liberties is integral from the dialectical standpoint of the working class while opinion opposed to it clearly reflects the positivist causal approach position of classes hostile to its struggle for emancipation. And today, as in the early nineteenth century, the most unashamedly imperialist Governments and Agencies supported by them are once more attacking the attainment of the objective of mass literacy.

How is this achieved? First and foremost, by ignoring all definitions of education other than the British "liberal and individualistic, one that (education) is an end in itself, not for instance a means to development or to the reduction of poverty." Once this is done, it is correctly stated that "this liberal and individualistic tradition, whatever form it takes," is innocent "of political and economic realities."⁹ Our contention is that this "innocence" results in arbitrarily creating water-tight compartments like "literacy" and "literacy plus" which in turn creates further problems like whether the 'plus' should be "vocational" or "conscientization or mobilisation."⁹ While the editor rejects this narrow definition of education, he then proceeds to throw out the baby with the bathwater by happily declaring "that none of the authors was 'unduly perturbed by the question—what is adult education?' or where lie its proper boundaries—questions that have frequently paralysed those in the British liberal tradition."¹⁰

There is, in fact, the revolutionary, working-class tradition which has very clear ideas of education, which is ignored by the editor and contributors altogether and it is not out of place to spell out its ideas on education here. V I Lenin, the founder of one of the world's most efficient education systems, the Soviet one, addressed the first All Russia Congress on Education in 1918 as follows: "We publicly declare that education divorced from life and politics is lies and hypocrisy." How easily both the narrow British view and the pragmatic U S version stand dissolved from this perspective! Nor is it surprising that education programmes of the exploiting classes fail to enthuse the masses or to achieve their avowed aims. They are, in fact, never meant to succeed beyond a point. And the case studies in the book are proof of it."¹¹

The Brazilian account states: "Our opinion is that the process of adult education cannot sensibly precede or follow other economic and social transformations. It is necessary to act concomitantly on the various levels on sub-systems of the social structure, and not to leave co-ordination of efforts to mere chance, to maximize the impact of the resources available for reducing poverty. *When literacy training takes place separately from other transformations at local and regional levels we run the risk not only of having what is learnt left unused, but also of repression and resistance to future educational actions.* The only possible benefits are individual ones. These should not be down-graded or undervalued, *but they are limited in scope*, when the basic objective is the improvement of quality of life."¹²

The Indian experience states: "One cannot help concluding that for a

vast majority of the population, which is in the grips of *absolute poverty*, the amelioration of that poverty, by direct relief and development of opportunities for income augmentation, is a prerequisite for adult education to be relevant. However, this is not a general conclusion, but a comment only on the *direct effect* of a Governmental Adult Education Programme where the Government concerned has a vested interest in the status quo."¹³ Secondly, it refers only to absolute poverty, since the author notes the relevance of adult education alters with a rise beyond absolute poverty to acquiring new skills and expanding their extremely limited sphere of activity. This shows one how narrow and meaningless such a perspective becomes in the context of dealing with the question of adult literacy in general or even of tackling the question meaningfully as a whole.

The Kenyan experience is even clearer about this, when it notes "Adult education, even at its first stage of literacy, by opening the door to the wide world of the printed message, can become an invaluable instrument for consciousness-raising and enhancing popular participation in the development process, when the contents and methods are chosen appropriately. If a large proportion of the adults are illiterate, an effective and sustained popular participation in local development is unimaginable without a literacy component and other adult education activities."¹⁴

The Chilean case-study is very clear about the limitations of such schemes under authoritarianism, when it notes "The programme was a mixture of failure and success: a failure in terms of the social, political experience to function in an authoritarian society like that of Chile at the time, a success in terms of the survival of the work based on local organisation and resources."¹⁵

These narrow parameters of 'success' are again noted in the South Korean experience. "Saemul education, like the overall Saemul movement, has components *not directly designed to benefit the rural poor*, but designed to give them the opportunity to benefit." However, this too does not appear to mean much, as "the most poor experienced less benefit from Saemul education and the Saemul movement. Clearly the movement and its education have not yet fully succeeded where needs are greatest."¹⁶

Lenin pointed out clearly why this is so. "One of the fundamental faults of education in the capitalist world was its alienation from the basic task of organising labour, since the capitalist had to train and educate obedient and disciplined workers. There was no connection in capitalist society between the actual tasks of the organisation of social labour and teaching. There was dead, scholastic, routine teaching, befouled by the influence of the clergy which everywhere, even in the most democratic republics, functioned in such a way that everything fresh and healthy was compelled to withdraw. Direct, vital work was made difficult because no extensive education was possible without a state apparatus and without material and financial aid."¹⁷

In the process of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the major

obstacle to working class organisation, the bourgeois state machinery, was dismantled, and we are told "The revolutionary struggle has been the finishing school for Russian workers and peasants. They have seen that our system alone ensure their genuine rule, they have been able to convince themselves that the state is doing everything to assist the workers and the poor peasants in completely crushing the resistance of the Kulaks, the land-owners and the capitalists."

"The working people are thirsting for knowledge because they need it to win. Nine out of ten of the working people have realised that knowledge is a weapon in their struggle for emancipation, that their failures are due to lack of education, and that now it is up to them really to give everyone access to education."¹⁸

It is not surprising then, that a similar mass education urge is reflected in the process of the Nicaraguan liberation with the downfall of the US puppet, Somosa, and that it culminates in a successful literacy campaign, described in this collection. In fact, the Nicaraguans reduced illiteracy from 50 per cent in 1979 (and 85 per cent in some rural areas) to a mere 13 per cent in little over a year. By no stretch of imagination could any of the other case studies in this volume even come close to this kind of result. And that too, when 40,000 to 50,000 people had been slaughtered by Somosa's thugs and 40,000 children had been orphaned.

The programme was national and anti-imperialist in outlook, organised by the Government and coordinated by an organised anti-imperialist mass in struggle, without imperialist aid which had kept the mass of Nicaraguans illiterates for so many years.

There were six divisions: (1) Pedagogy, which was further sub-divided into Curriculum, Research, Training and Library/Museum sections; (2) Production and Design; (3) Organisation was a support and control structure for the literacy volunteers, and provided liaison with the different sponsoring organisations. It had five sections: Statistics and Census, the Popular Literacy Army, the Urban Literacy Guerrillas; the citizens and labour organisations; (5) Financial Promotion and (6) Administration, which included logistical support (supplies, health, food distribution, transportation, communication and maintenance and plant maintenance) and that of Control, Accounting, Personnel and Budget.²⁰ Obviously, such a vast programme cannot be treated in the same framework as either the petty schemes or grand failures outlined above without seriously tampering with the comparative method.

Nor is their outlook comparable with the others in the case studies, for they declare "We are teaching the poor and the disfranchised to read and write not out of charity, but rather so that they will be prepared both politically and technically to become the genuine authors of development and the only legitimate owners of the Revolution."²¹

The conclusions too are self-evident: "When adult education programmes addressed the structural roots of poverty—the system of inequitable power relationships—they inevitably create tensions and provoke reactions

from the dominant elites. If these strong interests hold the ultimate power, programmes will be limited and distorted. Under these circumstances improved living conditions for small isolated sectors of the population may be possible in the short run, but because the underlying causes of poverty remain untouched, such gains will probably not be longlasting and certainly not spread to other needy sectors. Only when a nation—a government and a people—is willing to battle the root causes of poverty, the disparities of power and wealth, can adult education programmes really be effective in ameliorating these conditions. When such efforts form an integral part of social transformation aimed to benefit and empower the poor, they can contribute significantly to reducing disparities. Before that moment, however, *they can still play an important part by providing basic education to some of those who will eventually take a lead in the changes necessary to forge a more equitable society*”²² Now it becomes obvious why the plutocrats of West Germany, Britain and USA are nervous about UNESCO’s planned crusade to end illiteracy by the year 2000 and are clamouring for a ‘practicable’ solution. And this volume offers them a straw to clutch at.

One experience stands out among the rest of the “failed” national efforts of Third World states pursuing the path of crisis-ridden capitalist development—that of Sri Lanka, to whom our editor offers the “last word” although nowhere in Wijetunga’s articles is any factual information given as regards the success of the Sarvodaya Shramdana programme there. So one wonders why they have been singled out for fulsome praise and compared so often to Nicaragua (albeit without any evidence to back up the claim), unless it is to dilute the force of Miller’s conclusion.

What are the special qualities of this programme that has caused the editor to single it out? It claims to be “apolitical” voluntary agency, but we are informed that the leader of the movement “is both courted and feared by the government.”²³ And the turning point is said to have come in 1966 when a hostile government attacked the organisation in the form of a cutback in finances, “and the movement was suddenly faced with either drastically curtailing and reshaping its activities or seeking substantial support from external sources.”²⁴ And this the author considers a “propitious” moment in its developments. Who were these sources who freed our apolitical crusaders from their national government? Basically Dutch and West German ones, as well as the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), which set the ball rolling in 1970. This organisation has an interesting history. “Through the NSA (National Students Association of USA) the World Assembly of Youth was controlled and operated by the CIA. There was an Indian affiliate of the WAY called WAY-India, now renamed Indian Assembly of Youth, after the exposure of the CIA links with the WAY.”²⁵

Moreover, the particular programme of financing elements in Sri Lanka was not unconnected with political activity. Around the same time, Sri Lanka’s Finance Minister N.M. Perera disclosed “that the US Embassy in Colombo was making huge withdrawals from its food accumulations in the

banks. He alleged that the money was being used to subsidize the rightwing United National Party and other secessionist groups on the island."²⁶ And, of course, Wijetunga notes that "The seventies was a period of unprecedented expansion of the Movement, but also a period of considerable tension and distrust between SSM and the Government, particularly between 1975 and 1977. Since 1977 (with the coming to power of the UNP) relations between SSM and the government have been more harmonious, with close collaboration in various developmental activities."²⁷

Moreover, Ariyaratne (who is a Magsaysay award-winner of 1969), "claims that Sarvodaya Shramadana is a synthetic ideology, with possibilities of universal application. In the Sri Lankan context, it has to draw its inspiration from the dominant Buddhist culture and philosophy to be easily understood by the people."²⁸ Are we then to understand that this successful form of conscientization is responsible for the spate of pogroms against Tamils that have taken place in 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1983 and over 3000 killed since then? If this is the price we pay for the US-inspired model of educational progress, we can do well without it. It should, moreover, be a warning to those who think that seemingly "apolitical" action-oriented groups receiving funds from abroad have no political ramifications in terms of imperialist intervention at all levels or that they can digest such funds successfully without upsetting the status quo too much.

Thus we are unable to agree with the conclusion dished out by the editor that for the success of such programmes to eradicate illiteracy and poverty, "evidently there is no simple correlation along a socialist-capitalist or authoritarian-liberal political spectrum." In fact, Miller's conclusion cited above is far more plausible than his, even on the basis of his case studies. Moreover, nor can we subscribe to his view that "here Sarvodaya appeared to sustain a commitment to radical social transformation and to avoid becoming embroiled in and destroyed by formal politics, despite the deeply political import of what it was doing."³⁰ For, according to the facts presented in the paper itself, and conclusions drawn from them, the organisation functioned as a pawn of imperialist agencies, notably the CIA, and was part and parcel of the political process that brought the UNP to power, a process which now threatens to destroy Sri Lankan society rather than develop it. The fact that the editor of this volume could only find the Sri Lankan example to counteract the Nicaraguan one is evidence indeed of how poorly imperialism is doing in its search for "alternatives" to socialist transformation. And that is heartening as we can be sure that such bankrupt forces cannot be more than nuisance to UNESCO and its far reaching programmes. It should be the concern of every intellectual, academic and student to make sure that illiteracy is eradicated by the year 2000 and that no compromise is made to bypass rather than eradicate the social and political obstacles in the way of its implementation.

Suneet Chopra, Vice President
Democratic Youth Federation of India

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PRODUCTION RELATIONS AND AGRARIAN CHANGE ● TRAM
WORKERS OF CALCUTTA ● NON-INFLATIONARY DEFICIT
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Articles and review express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

Editorial Note

THE CHANGES that have taken place in the agricultural sector in India over the last decade or so cannot but be of profound interest to students of development problems. In the pre-war years over which the shadow of the Great Depression had loomed large, the notion of agrarian crisis was closely bound up with declining terms of trade for the peasantry and all its attendant consequences—pauperisation, growing debt, increasing burden of usury, etc. In the fifties and the early sixties, by contrast, much of the radical academic literature that emerged was marked by a perception of a very different kind—capitalistic industrialisation which was being assiduously promoted through active state intervention was seen as being constrained by fetters upon agricultural output-growth arising from the pervasive existence of pre-capitalist relationships in the countryside. This, it was argued, would give rise to inflationary tilt to the terms of trade in favour of agriculture, and lead to an impoverishment not of the peasantry as a whole, but of that section of the peasantry and agricultural labourers, apart from the urban working class, whose incomes do not keep pace with the rise in prices. A very clear exposition of this view was provided by Michel Kalecki who remarked “the problem of mobilising adequate resources for economic development is nothing else but the problem of raising agricultural output”

The nature of agrarian crisis was correspondingly perceived differently. It was not a crisis affecting pre-capitalist producers as a whole who are tied to a world market that pushes the burden of depression on to their shoulders, it was a crisis faced by large sections of pre-capitalist producers who are impoverished by inflation and evicted from land by a growing capitalist tendency within agriculture itself that seeks to take advantage of the profitable opportunities opened up under the regime of “planned development”

Over the last decade or so, however, an altogether new experience has been upon us. Starting since 1975, the terms of trade have moved against the agricultural sector, the decline in terms of trade to date has been of the order of 15 per cent according to official data. This has brought forth widespread peasant actions, led no doubt by the landlords and the rich peasantry, but involving the participation of large sections of the middle and even poor peasantry. Over the last couple of years in particular there have been sharp declines in prices of a number of commercial crops and also a huge accumulation of stocks of foodgrains. Partly no doubt this latest phenomenon reflects cyclical over-production. But its insertion into a broader context of a decade-long decline in the terms of trade for agriculture, and the fact that this longer-term decline is itself not a phenomenon confined only to India but paralleled by the decline in primary commodity prices all

over the world since the mid-seventies, suggests that we are in an altogether new phase where the contours of the agrarian crisis have an altogether different shape. And this new phase is going to stay with us awhile. With the world capitalist economy showing no signs of shaking off the protracted stagnation into which it has sunk since the mid-seventies, primary commodity prices are going to remain depressed in the foreseeable future, which is bound to have its impact upon the Indian scene as well. What is more, the Indian economy, unlike say the Latin American economies, has until now escaped the specific rigours of the world capitalist crisis in terms of a synchronous downturn in growth-rates, and this situation may be changing what with the worsening of the payments crisis, international lenders are bound to impose on the country deflationary measures to the detriment *inter alia* of the peasantry.

The necessity for studying this new phase can hardly be over-emphasised. The shape of class-conflicts it unleashes, the nature of class-alignments it portends, all these have a vital bearing upon the development of our economy and policy. *Social Scientist* would like to publish in the coming numbers a series of articles upon the agrarian question as it stands today. For a start, we publish a brief piece by Venkatesh Athreya and associates which is part of a much wider empirical study they have done about class-differentiation within the peasantry in a specific region.

Social Scientist has always been interested in publishing pieces which recapture the history of the struggle of the working people in the country. The piece by Siddhartha Guha Ray which recounts the struggles of the Calcutta tramways workers during the decade of the twenties belongs to this genre.

The article by Atul Sarma and V B Tulsidhar is not only an empirical exercise for determining the "safe limit" to deficit financing, the interesting on that score itself as a methodological exercise, but also an exposition providing insights into the structure of the economy. Finally, we publish C P Geevan's piece on the Challenger tragedy, which holds important lessons for all thinking persons on the question of the interaction between science and society in the contemporary era.

VENKATESH B. ATHREYA
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Production Relations and Agrarian Change
Some Findings from a Case Study in Tamil Nadu

IN THE LIVELY debate on the mode of production in Indian agriculture conducted mainly in the pages of *Economic and Political Weekly* and *Social Scientist* in the late sixties and early seventies, some important issues concerning the impact of production relations in agriculture came to the fore¹. Among them were the rôle of landlordism and usury as obstacles to development, and the changes in agrarian class structure brought about (and in the offing) since Independence². In the present paper, we briefly report some findings from a case study set in Tamil Nadu which have a bearing on these issues.

We proceed as follows. In the following section, we provide a brief description of the study area and the methods we have used to collect the material. We then present a summary picture of the relations of production and of agrarian class structure as it emerges from our exercise in classification that we have reported in detail elsewhere (Athreya et al 1983). Finally we turn to the bearing that our findings may have on some issues raised in the ongoing debate on agrarian development in India³.

The Field Area and Methods Used

This study is set in Kulithalai and Manaparei Panchayat Union in Tiruchy District in Tamil Nadu, South India. In this area we find a microscopic representation of the major ecological types in Tamil Nadu agriculture.

This geographically small area contains two very different agrarian ecotypes which we call the *wet* and the *dry* area, corresponding to what Baker [1984], after Ludden [1978 a and b], calls the *valleys* and the *plains*, two major divisions in Tamil Nadu's social ecology. The wet area refers to a belt stretching along the river Kaveri, where a canal system benefits the alluvial lands. The densely populated villages are cool and shady, situated along the canals,

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and surrounded by orchard of coconut trees. Between the villages are paddy fields, cane and banana plantations, green throughout the year thanks to a generous supply of water. But the irrigated belt is quite narrow, a few miles away from the river the lush green is replaced by the red sandy soils of the rainfed tracts, where vegetation is much more sparse. Here cultivation is, to a large extent, carried out on rainfed lands, which can support only millets or sorghum, sometimes intercropped with pulses.

The main empirical material consists of a detailed *farm and household economic survey* of 367 households in three "wet" and three "dry" villages. The villages were chosen from among 65 administratively defined "villages" with probability proportional to size—so-called PPS-sampling, see Cochran [1977]. Within each village we took a simple random sample from 99 per cent of the agrarian population (the main sample), and then we did a census of the remaining 1 per cent, the richest households in each village (what we call the UPC, or the upper percentile). In this way, the very skewed distribution of many key variables (like land and wealth) would be covered through over-representation of the tail-enders.

An extensive interview was made with each household selected. It covered the main aspects of the asset-structure and their farm economy for an entire crop-year—the year ending with the current season. Data collection lasted from November 1979 to May 1980.

Adequate coverage of land tenure was secured by extensive preparatory investigation—in principle we knew the extent of land owned and cultivated by the household *before* the interview. The investigators were thoroughly coached in farm economy, and were taught to look out for and probe into inconsistencies, evasions, underestimates, etc.—sometimes by collecting information from neighbours and other informants. The interviews were analyzed in the field by totalling up farm budgets, and by making a preliminary classification. All this, plus the considerable effort put down in creating rapport by explaining the purpose of the study to the respondents, has improved the quality of the data.

The heart of the interview was the *farm-operations form* in which, for all the crops cultivated on a farm, all operations were taken down, with details on inputs used, labour expended, and cash spent. From these data, a three-fold account can be built up, covering (1) inputs and output in material terms, (2) labour used specified by type (family, exchange, hired), and (3) cash flows (costs of inputs, income from marketing).

The resulting structure of the material enables us to work, not only with a conventional farm account (primarily in money terms), but also with other types of accounting, counting e.g. in labour days, or in kind terms (kgs of paddy for instance).

Relations of Production and Class Structure

We have used the material from the farm and household economic study to assign each household to a specific class category based on the criterion of surplus appropriation. We shall not enter upon a detailed

explanation of this criterion here (see Athreya et al, op cit). A summary version of the classification scheme is presented in Table 1

Table 1
Description of Classes

<i>Class Category</i>	<i>Description</i>
Agricultural Labour Households ¹	Not operating land. Obtaining livelihood from agricultural labour
Poor Peasant Households	Operating land. Farm income insufficient to cover household grain consumption requirements
Middle Peasant Households	Operating land. Farm income is sufficient to meet grain requirements of the household, but insufficient to meet one or more of the following: 1) Non-grain consumption requirements, 2) Cash cost of reproduction of the farm, or 3) Cash cost to replace family labour with hired labour
Surplus Appropriating households (includes rich peasants, capitalist farmers and cultivating landlords)	Farm income more than sufficient to cover all consumption requirements, farm reproduction requirements and the replacement value of family labour, (imputed at ruling wage rates)

The classification is based on the positing of a hierarchy of reproduction levels: grain requirements, cash costs of reproduction of farm, and non-grain consumption requirements. Kind costs have been netted out in the accounting we used. The ordering of reproduction levels is theoretically somewhat arbitrary, but is based on the situation obtaining in the field, where most of the poor and middle peasants are grain producers.

For the sake of simplification, rich peasants and landlords (capitalist and others) have been lumped together. We have, elsewhere, made a more detailed classification of these categories (see Athreya et al, op cit).

Based on this description of classes, let us now turn to the picture of the class structures in the two areas of study.

The canal-irrigated belt on the south of the Kaveri has a fertile alluvial-black soil complex and an eminent system of irrigation, receiving water for 10-11 months a year. This makes it possible to cultivate three paddy crops a year, or two crops of paddy and a third crop of sesame or black gram. Paddy covers nearly 2/3 of the gross cultivated area, and more than half the paddy area under high-yielding varieties (See table 2 below). Almost year-round area under high-yielding varieties (See table 2). Almost year-round banana and sugarcane.

In terms of social structure, the wet area can be seen as part of the Thanjavur delta, as it once had the same structure of Brahmin-dominated landlordism described by Gough [1981]. But the old system of share-cropping has been partially displaced. The area had a lively tenant's movement in the 50s which, before it collapsed, succeeded in giving some life to the Land Reform

Table II
Gross Cultivated Area Broken Down by Ecotype and Crop (per cent)

Crop	Ecotype	
	Wet area (per cent)	Dry area (per cent)
Paddy, traditional and improved varieties	28	5
Paddy, high-yielding varieties	34	19
Sugar-cane	8	—
Bananas	20	—
Solam	—	16
Solam, Intercropped	2	16
Cumbu	—	13
Groundnut	—	7
Various crops	7	23
Total	99	99

Act As a result, about half of all tenants pay legally regulated rents. In the unregulated lease-markets, share-croppers of the traditional type nowadays are interspersed with capitalist tenants. Handsome rates of return, especially in banana cultivation, enable capitalist farmers to compete with the poor sharecroppers.

But many of the old landlords have also opted out of agriculture; under the threat of land-reform they have sold their lands to farmers who manage their own cultivation. Roughly half of all land is owner-cultivated. Farm sizes vary from small parcels where poor peasants grow paddy for own consumption, to big estates entirely relying upon wage-labour.

The class structure of the wet area is very polarized. At the base of the social pyramid we have a landless proletariat, making up 30 per cent of the agrarian population (See table 3). Another 19 per cent are poor peasants. They cultivate own or leased-in land, but on such a small scale that they have to rely on labouring out as a primary source of income. These two groups together make up what we call the rural proletariat which consists, then, of nearly half the agrarian population.

The middle peasantry constitutes 21 per cent of the agrarian population. The majority among them are victims of a "simple reproduction squeeze" they are unable to subsist on their farming and have to rely on supplementary sources of income, either as agricultural labourers or outside agriculture, in trade, services, or industry. Only a minority are autonomously reproductive peasants who are in principle independent of non-farm sources of income, subsisting, thanks to their own labour and that of their family, on their own farm, but dependent nevertheless on the exploitation of hired labour.

Table III
Estimated class structure of wet and dry area
(per centage of agrarian population)

Class	Wet area	Dry area
Rural Proletariat		
Agricultural Labourers	30	16
Poor peasants	19	28
Middle peasants	21	46
Rich peasants	6	2
Capitalist farmers	5	2
Cultivating landlords	2	0
Pure landlords	2	0
Others and unclassifiable	14	6
Total	99	100

The dry area covers the major part of the field area, but has only about half of its population, spread in smaller settlements. In contrast to the wet area which obtains water from the rain-rich mountains on the west coast, the dry area is entirely dependent on local rainfall, less than 1000 millimetres a year. Evapotranspiration is high in this sub-tropical climate, and is exceeded by rainfall only in October-November with the North-East Monsoon. Some of the rain is collected in tanks, and is used for a single crop of paddy, but this system covers less than 10 per cent of the operated area. Wells cover a 44 per cent share of the operated area. They are dug both to supplement irrigation in tank-fed lands, and as an "independent" source of irrigation. The better wells, with powerful pumpsets permit double and occasionally even triple cropping.

The small tanks are not in general maintained properly. Damages to embankments and sluices are common. So is silting. Therefore the production potential of the tanks is not tapped, nor is their function as systems of drainage fulfilled, with soil erosion and flooding as some of the consequences. The background to this state of affairs is, on the one hand, the decline of local forms of cooperation which once made possible both the construction and the maintenance of these tanks. On the other hand, investments in well irrigation allow landowners to solve their problems of irrigation individually, thus mitigating the deleterious effects of the decline of the tanks for those who can acquire private means of irrigation. Thus they are less inclined to press for the maintenance of the tanks.

Before the introduction of pumpsets, water was drawn from shallow wells with the help of oxen (*kavalai*). The low productivity of this technology put a barrier to the expansion of this form of irrigation. One man working a full day with a pair of bullocks can hardly irrigate more than an acre or so.

Only cultivators commanding lots of unpaid or cheap labour, i.e. either poor or middle peasants with reserves of family labour, or landlords with access to bonded labour, would be able to benefit from this technology

The pump has changed all this. The owner of a well and a pumpset can now irrigate his land at a low cost in terms both of labour and cash. The rapid expansion of well-irrigation since the mid-60s has created a new scope for surplus appropriation in the dry area.

Unlike in the wet area, there is hardly any leasing of land in the dry area. If a landowner is unable to cultivate his land, as the small ones frequently are, the land is usually left fallow. We take this to mean that landed property is not, on the whole, an *independent means* of surplus appropriation, as it is in the wet area. In the dry area, surplus appropriation from farming requires own cultivation. It also requires livestock and irrigation.

In the wet area we find that occasionally even bigger farmers make do without own livestock. They hire ploughmen, and carry on cultivation without farm-yard manure. They can do without, since canal-water is so rich in silt, and carries fertilization material to the fields (which, of course, can be complemented with chemical fertilizers). There is no counterpart to this natural fertilization in the dry area, except in the small part of the land which is tank-fed. Rainfed and well-fed lands require manuring, and thus own livestock becomes essential to a farm.

Rainfed land is on the whole not a source of surplus appropriation for the simple reason that dry crops yield only a few hundred kilogrammes of grain per acre, and fetch low prices in the market. That is why access to irrigation is crucial, i.e. not the unreliable supply of tank water, but the access to a dependable well and a pumpset. If the well is located on tank-fed land, it is all the better, because then it is recharged from the tank.

Thus, appropriation of surplus from farming requires the investment of capital in private irrigation works, and access to good land where the well can be dug. Wage-labour and family labour are the important forms of labour in the dry area, with family labour accounting for a bigger share of total labour input than in the wet area.

As a reflection of the importance of family labour, the middle peasantry is a more significant part of the population in the dry area. They account for nearly half the agrarian population. (See table 1). But like their counterparts in the wet area, they are in a simple reproduction squeeze. Less than ten per cent of the middle peasantry are autonomously reproductive, the rest being dependent upon non-farm sources of income.

In proportional terms, the rural proletariat is almost as big as in the wet area (44 compared to 49 per cent), but there is an important difference. In the wet area two-thirds of the rural proletariat is landless, while in the dry area the situation is the reverse: two-thirds cultivate land on their own. In short both the level of *proletarianization* as well as and the level of *polarization* are higher in the wet area.

A related difference between the class structures of the two areas is that,

due to the high level of surplus production in the wet area, the surplus appropriating classes constitute a bigger share of the total population (15 per cent), than in the dry area where they make up a mere 4 per cent.

Let us now turn to the implications of our findings on the class structure and relations of production in the study area for some of the issues referred to in the introductory part of this paper

Landlordism

Landlordism has been regarded as a formidable obstacle to agricultural development. By virtue of the land monopoly, the landlords are in a position to appropriate a sizeable share of the surplus. This permits the perpetuation of inefficient cultivation and it is a disincentive to entrepreneurship. Utsa Patnaik has theoretically established that, for a new technology to be accepted in such a land-rent dominated agrarian structure, it must make possible a radical improvement in productivity in order to attract capital from other profitable uses—accumulation of land, usury, commercial speculation, etc. She argued that the high-yielding varieties of wheat had the necessary potentials, but once they are introduced, stagnation will be re-established at a new level (Patnaik, 1976)

Our empirical material partly confirms this argument. At the same time our material shows that the requisite levels of productivity can be reached for commercial crops (in our case banana and sugar-cane). These capital-intensive crops have such high margins of return that they enable capitalist tenants to compete with share-croppers on the lease market. They can offer a cash rent that is equal to or higher than the cash equivalent of the kind rent paid by the share croppers (50 per cent of the output of paddy, net of harvest wages). It is thus evident that the obstacle that landed property erects to a capitalist development of agriculture is by no means absolute.

This is of course a significant conclusion since it modifies the picture of all-out stagnation that has so often been drawn of Indian agriculture, which is true for many parts but which definitely is misleading for others. At the same time, the narrow and restricted scope of this type of development is evident. To put it crudely—bananas and sugar-cane will not solve the nutritional problems in India. This development presupposes a demand for luxury food-items from a mainly urban market. It is an open question if it has had some beneficial effects, for example for the rural proletariat, whose employment opportunities improve with the intensification of cultivation. The latter is a question which we have not been able to go deeper into so far.

Another prerequisite for this development should be pointed out, namely land-reform. It is well-known that the Indian land reforms have fulfilled only a fraction of their professed goals. The administrative attack—if there ever was a sincere attack—on landlordism has been a failure. Parts of our field area belong to the exceptional places where some results of land-reform are easy to observe. What is more important, however, are the indirect results of land-reform. These indirect effects are of two kinds: (1) that landlords resume leased-out lands for own cultivation, and (2) that landlords sell out

their lands in order to pre-empt reform measures. The first process which has detrimental effects for the tenantry has often been noted, and it is clearly visible in our field material. The second process is less well-known and more important, since it makes it possible for new groups to acquire land, groups which are less conservative and more competent as cultivators. This mobility in the ownership structure explains why the traditional landlords have been reduced in numbers in our canal-irrigated area.

As long as one looks at the numerical size of the various classes, one can, however, get the erroneous impression that the transition to capitalist farming has virtually been completed in our area. If we look at the share of land controlled by the various class-fractions we get a corrective: pure landlords and cultivating landlords still control about 40 per cent of the operated area, and rich peasants and capitalist farmers control less than 20 per cent. The rich peasants and capitalist farmers are among those who have taken over land from the old landlord class. They represent an emerging force in Indian agriculture and rural society.

Reflecting on this partial replacement of landlordism, we would like to point out two important facts. (1) the State apparatus is important not only for the reproduction of the existing relations of production, but also for their transformation. But this conservative/transformational role of the State is very much the effect of (2) the class struggle. This point is also illustrated in our area. The partial displacement of landlordism which has occurred is unthinkable without the communist-led tenants' movement which swept the area in the 50s. The direct effect of this movement was that some tenants managed to get their leaseholds registered with the courts at regulated rates of rent, so that today about half of the leased area is registered. But again the indirect effect was more important. Scared by land-reform, many landlords decided to avoid giving the land to the militant tenants, and sold out big chunks to willing buyers.

Usury

In the same manner as landlordism, usury has often been portrayed as a major obstacle to the transformation of Indian agriculture. This position is taken by Bhaduri (1973) who sees the combined force of landlordism and usury as the main obstacle to technological development in agriculture. A related position is taken by Banaji (1977) who sees a combined merchant/usurious capital as the primary relations of exploitation in Indian agriculture which has the effect of draining the surplus out of the sector.

Our study of usury (Athreya et al 1985a) is parallel to the one on landlordism in showing that the conservative effect of usury is overestimated in these theories. Usurious capital has been forced into at least a partial retreat as an effect of the expansion of credit institutions in the rural areas, and as an effect of the pumping of cheap credit into agriculture. This offensive has been an important vehicle for the spreading of high-yielding varieties, increased fertilizer and pesticide use, and the expansion of well-irrigation in the rainfed and tank-irrigated areas.

Here too, State intervention proves to be of strategic importance the conservation/transformation of the production relations depends very much on the agrarian policies of the State

But here the role of class struggle between the rural exploiters and the exploited, which was stressed above, is less evident, since the credit expansion has not been the result of pressure from below. On the contrary, the pressure has come from above, as is exemplified by the far-from-cooperative nature of the Credit Cooperatives. As pointed out [in Athreya et al, op cit,] these cooperatives are quite old, but they were, to a large extent, defunct when they were revitalized by the injection of funds from the State. That part of their capital which is raised from the members is a mere fraction, however

On the other hand, class struggle has been more decisive for the future role of institutional credit in agriculture. Massive default and non-recovery, even of interest has been an endemic problem of institutional credit, a problem which was aggravated with the so-called farmers' agitation which swept the area from 1978 to 1981. The methods of struggle adopted by this movement included non-payment of interest and instalment on institutional loans, electricity charges and land tax. The intensity of the movement made it obvious that almost all sections of the peasantry were affected by the issues raised

But in order to fully understand this movement, one must go into the farm economy of various classes of farmers

Reproductive Squeeze on the Middle Peasantry

Our evidence (reported in detail in Athreya et al, 1983) shows that only a minority of the middle peasantry in both the wet and the dry areas are autonomously reproductive, i.e. independent of non-farm source of income. This is symptomatic of the deep transformation that has in fact occurred in this agrarian economy. The middle peasants depend for their reproduction only partly on their own labour. Commodities have become a significant part both of farm reproduction and of consumption. To the extent that the middle peasantry cannot raise this cash through sale of farm produce, they are dependent on other sources of income. The ratio between farm prices and prices of inputs and consumer goods is obviously decisive for the degree to which the middle peasantry becomes dependent on non-farm income, and for the proportion of the middle peasantry who are autonomously reproductive. The fact that only a minority of middle peasants in our areas are autonomous in this sense is thus, at least partly, the result of an unfavourable price structure. It should be noted here that prices of farm inputs are administered prices fixed by the state. However, the picture with respect to the product market in agriculture is quite different and rather complicated. There is considerable segmentation in this market. The poorer producers, especially those who borrow for the purchase of inputs, on account of their economic situation and urgent need for cash, generally sell the produce at **harvest at ruling post-harvest farm prices**. These sections of the peasantry

face what is practically a buyer's market. Those who have a large surplus to sell—the landlords and capitalist farmers—are in a different category altogether. They can afford to wait and sell at favourable prices.¹ For those sections, the official procurement prices serve essentially as support prices in years of abundant harvest. In years of poor output, these sections manage to evade, at least in part, procurement at below market prices. The product market—also varies as between crops. There is an administered price structure for some of the commercial crops such as sugarcane, but markets for crops like banana and chillies are subject to sharp price fluctuations. Broadly, one could say that poor and middle peasants producing paddy (in wet and dry areas) and crops such as chillies and cotton (in the dry areas) are placed precariously with respect to the product market. At the same time, there is significant state intervention in the product market, with the government fixing procurement prices for a number of crops like paddy and sugarcane.

On this point too, the crucial role of State intervention for the conservation/reproduction of the relations of production strikes the eye. The price relation becomes decisive for (1) the degree of autonomous reproduction of the middle peasantry, and (2) the size of the surplus of the upper class of farmers. The relations involves the middle and rich peasantry, and even the capitalist farmers in the same position *vis-a-vis* the State. Here we find an economic basis for an alliance between the middle peasants and the upper classes of farmers. The interesting potentiality here is for a crystallization of political contradictions, different from that exemplified by the tenants' movement discussed above, where the land-hungry sections of the peasantry were potentially allied. That is, in the tenants' movement, the middle peasants could be expected to ally with the poor and landless peasants could be expected to ally with the poor and landless peasants against the big landowners, while in the farmers' agitation, they allied with the big landowners *against* the State. This process, which we have so far only been able to study in outline, is important to an understanding of the development prospects in Indian agrarian society. At any rate, it shows that an alliance between the peasantry and the rural proletariat cannot obviously be assumed as an automatic consequence of the "new agricultural strategy".

Class Structure, Relations of Production and the State

Our study has forcefully brought home to us an aspect of the analysis of agrarian structure which has been relatively neglected in the mode of production debate—the role of the State in the determination of class structure and relations of production. In the two extreme stylised 'models' put forward in the debate—Bhaduri's model of semi-feudalism [Bhaduri 1973], and Banaji's model of merchant capital domination [Banaji 1977]—there was no room for the State. This was not surprising, since the question had been posed as one of the 'mode of production in agriculture'. In the context of the Indian agrarian economy since Independence, this was obviously incomplete, given the major role of the State in the attempt to promote capitalist development. What our material brings out is that the intervention of the

State—through agrarian reform legislations, massive pumping of credit, provision of subsidised irrigation and procurement and price policies—has been extremely important in strengthening commoditization, developing productive forces and promoting capitalist relations of production. Our material also shows that, while as a consequence of both State intervention and class struggle, the obstacles posed by landlordism and usury have been partially overcome in the study area, the process is both fragile and not without its contradictions. The fragility of the process is especially evident in the sphere of credit where large sections of the peasantry faced with a crisis brought about by sharply increased relative prices of manufactured inputs, and crop failures, lent their support to the “farmers’s agitation”, demanding moratorium on debt and distraint proceedings, and higher prices for produce. Similarly, while in our wet area where class struggles as well as State-initiated land reforms have led to the considerable strengthening of owner cultivation and of tenants in relation to the landlords, the latter still control two fifths of land, and land-rent remains an important element of surplus. The analytical resolution of these contradictory aspects is obviously not to be sought in agriculture, but in the economy as a whole, and specifically in the contradictions of capitalist development under the aegis of a bourgeois-landlord State, and against the background of its complex relations with imperialism.

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- 1 A recent review of the debate can be found in Thorner, 1982.
- 2 See especially Bhaduri 1973, Banaji 1977, and Patnaik 1976.
- 3 One finding which is not immediately related to the debate on the mode of production, but is relevant to it is that our material throws considerable doubt on the alleged inverse relationship between farm size and productivity asserted by many writers (see for instance Berry and Cline 1979). Instead, our data demonstrate that intensity of input use and advantages of class are decisive influences on productivity. For a detailed discussion see Athreya et al 1980b.
- 4 The point should be stressed that in any comprehensive—i.e. economic, political and ideological—conceptualization of class, the disjunction between rich peasants and landlords would of course be important.
- 5 Prices received by big capitalist farmers in the wet area for paddy were, on the average, 25 per cent higher in the case of local and improved varieties, and 10 per cent higher in the case of HYVs, than the prices received by the poor and middle peasants. In the case of some banana varieties, big capitalist farmers received prices which were higher by almost two thirds. Similarly, in the dry area, capitalist farmers enjoyed a 15-20 per cent price advantage.

over poor and middle peasants in the case of cumbu and HYV paddy. For a further discussion of this point see Athreya et al 1985b

- 6 It is worthwhile to emphasize here that the transition from usury to credit is by no means complete in our study area. Private moneylenders still cater to about half of the credit needs, and the less-usurious rates of interest have by no means benefitted each and everybody. Second, the massive rates of default may bring about a retreat of credit capital, leaving a bigger share of the market to usurious capital and, in the same process, giving it a chance to hike up the interest rates again. Third, and most important, there is no automatism built into the expansion of credit capital. It is not primarily the result of a self-reproduction of capital. The active agent is instead the State, the whole process is a result of State intervention—a political intervention in the economic the aim of which is to increase the level of commoditization in the agrarian economy.

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SIDDHARTHA GUHA RAY*

*Tramworkers of Calcutta Some Reflections On their
Unionisation and Political Experience 1920 to 1930.*

THE YEAR 1920 is rather significant in many ways, in the history of working class struggle in modern India. It was from about this time that the working class of India began to be involved in the broader stream of the nationalist politics. Although Bombay workers had launched a political strike in 1908 to protest against Tilak's arrest and Gandhi made his enigmatic experiments with the Ahmedabad mill hands in 1917-18, the labour force in India began to come out of the orbit of narrow economic demands to associate itself with the outsiders for organising itself only from 1920.

In 1919 the Indian National Congress at its 35th session in Amritsar urged its provincial Committees to secure for the working class "a proper place in the body politic of India".¹ In 1920 the first federation of Indian trade unions, the All India Trade Union Congress (A I T U C), had its birth and its inaugural session witnessed the presence of eminent Congress leaders, though this whole process took place much against the wishes of Gandhi.² The strike wave of the early 20s in different industries throughout India saw the working class emerge as a significant force. This obviously accelerated the process of interaction between the Indian National Congress and the working class. Despite the efforts of the Indian National Congress to win over the support and sympathy of the workers, the latter in many industries rallied behind the Communist Party of India (C P I), after its genesis in 1925. The case of the tramwaymen of Calcutta also tells a similar story. They were trying to get themselves organised against their employers with a view to redressing their grievances and at this crucial phase, important Congress leaders of Bengal came forward to unionise them in 1920. Eventually disillusioned over the experiences of the early 1920s, the tramwaymen, however, gradually began to switch over from the Congress fold to the Communist forum. This essay attempts to look into the whole process of unionisation of tramworkers as well as to examine the factors responsible for their disillusionment with the Congress leadership, and their gravitation towards the Communist party. It will also be shown how the Communists inspired them to fight not only on rudimentary economic issues but also to respond to events of political significance.

General Condition of Tramwaymen of Calcutta

In the early 20s the tramwaymen were subject to oppressive service conditions by the British monopolist Calcutta Tramways Company. The work force of the Company consisted of two categories. Those in the traffic section were drivers and conductors, while those engaged in Nonapukur workshop were engaged mainly in welding, painting and the assembling of different parts.¹ Apart from them, there were checkers and inspectors, who belonged to supervisory rank and clerks in the head office.

A person belonging to the traffic staff (either as a driver or a conductor) had to work for 12 hours a day against a monthly pay of Rs. 19.² But he could not earn even this meagre amount since he was employed purely on a daily wage basis. As the Company used to engage surplus staff, he would often be deprived of his daily employment. Leave-casual or otherwise—was unknown to him. In the case of injury, due to accidents during duty hours, he received neither any allowance “on compassionate ground”, nor the wages during the period of his absence due to injury. In cases of accidents for which he was not responsible, his attendance at the court was compulsory, he could claim neither his pay—during these days (often numbering 10 to 20 days at a stretch) nor his travelling expenses, which he himself had to bear. From 1918 onwards, the issuing of overcoats to the members of the traffic staff during the winter season had been stopped. Trams would start plying at 4.30 a.m. in the morning and remained on rails upto 12 at night. To fight the cold he had to buy his own winter garments.³ There was a Workman’s Compensation Act since 1923, but it did not cover the workers of small factories, mines, the railways and tramways.⁴

Apart from these strains, inflicted by the Company, a member of the traffic staff was constantly harassed by the flying checkers and inspectors who tried to exact illegal ‘gratuity’ from him. Whenever the worker refused to meet the dishonest demand of the checkers and inspectors, the latter would lodge a false complaint to the management against the man concerned. He was suspended or even dismissed often without any proper enquiry.⁵ Along with his job went his salary due and also his deposit money (every worker had to deposit Rs. 31 with the Company at the time of joining) a case which the aggrieved man referred to as a “forfeit case”. To go back to his native place, he had to sell his household goods and utensils and sometimes even had to borrow money from friends and relations.⁶ This practice had the further adverse effect on the workers of leading them into the clutches of money lenders.⁷ These latter, together with the inspectors and checkers, drove the workers to extreme poverty.

The First Strike

From Spontaneity to Organisation :

With the intention of ameliorating their precarious economic conditions, the tramwaymen of the traffic section placed a petition before the General Manager of the Company in June 1920, demanding an increase in

the wages. In reply, they were informed that the General Manager was awaiting the instructions of the Directors of the Company in London.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in August, two drivers of the Company were sacked, allegedly for inciting the tramwaymen against the management.¹¹ On the 11th of September, the Police Commissioner of Calcutta suddenly received an anonymous petition, containing a list of grievances of Calcutta tramwaymen. Their demands in the petition included a 75 percent increase in wages, supply of free uniforms and reinstatement of the two retrenched workers.¹² The Police Commissioner, whose concern was to avoid the impasse that would be caused by a transport strike in the city, approached both the management and the workers to come to an amicable settlement. But his efforts proved futile. The workers ultimately made it clear that unless favourable orders were passed on the petitions submitted to the Police Commissioner and management, they would resort to a continuous strike from the 1st of October.¹³ Tramwaymen's grievances went unheeded and they struck work on the first day of October.

It is not clear why the drivers and conductors submitted an anonymous petition and why they picked on the Police Commissioner to place their demands with. The tramwaymen who had no association at that time did not dare expose the names of their leaders. This simple evidence throws light on the uncertainty in which they had to work. As to the second question, the plausible answer may be that the men, being apprehensive of police excesses in the event of their resorting to a strike, kept the most important man of the Calcutta Police informed about their position.

About 2,500 drivers and conductors kept themselves away from normal duty on 1st of October, which led to a virtual paralysis of the city life.¹⁴ The management of the Company tried desperately to retain normal services of tramcars. The checkers and inspectors, who were generally Anglo-Indians and were better paid, volunteered their services as drivers and conductors. The strikers on the other hand fought hard to make their strike a success. On the 1st of October, the Razabazar tram depot became a scene of violence. One Mr. Kettle, trying to drive a car, received resistance from the strikers. He knocked down a conductor. Infuriated, the strikers attacked Kettle, who had to be rescued by the police.¹⁵

The eruption of violence proved alarming both to the management, as well as to the Government. Moreover, Congress leaders of Bengal who believed in the credo of non-violence preached by Gandhi also did not like the violent stance of the strikers. Hence a meeting took place between the workers and management on the 3rd of October, at the initiative of the Government. The workers were represented by two drivers, two conductors and five other 'gentlemen' who were not in the service of the Tramways Company.¹⁶ The identity of three of these five gentlemen is known. They were Nisith Chandra Sen, Byomkesh Chakrabarti and Nirmal Chander Chandra, the first two were barristers. All the three gentlemen were prominent Congress leaders and reportedly "staunch non-cooperators".¹⁷ In that meeting, the General Manager of the Company agreed to increase the

initial pay from Rs 19 to Rs 24, supply free uniforms and reinstate discharged drivers. The men insisted that the two retrenched drivers should be allowed to drive the first cars on 4th of October, when they would resume their duty. The General Manager had to agree.¹⁸ Tramwaymen were jubilant with their victory and shouted, "Kali Mai Ki Joy".¹⁹ This slogan indicates that the impact of Swadeshi Movement was still fresh among the tramworkers. "Kali Mai" as a symbol of spirit (Shakti) played a vital role in crystallizing Swadeshi ideology. In fact, Sumit Sarkar has used Jadu Gopal Mukherjee's 'Biblabi Jibaner Smritikatha' to give us the information that in October 1905, the tram drivers and conductors had observed a token strike in support of the Swadeshis.²⁰ A considerable number of drivers and conductors of the early 20s, who also participated in the strike during the Swadeshi Movement were still swayed by the war-cry, "Kali Mai Ki Joy". That religion had nothing to do with the slogan is clear from the fact that one of the leaders of the strike was Mahmod Siddique, a Muslim driver.²¹ However, at the initiative of the Government on the one hand and the non-cooperator 'Bhadraloks' on the other, the strike came to an end and trams started plying from 4th October, as usual.

For the first time in the history of tramwaymen of Calcutta the Congress leaders had come forward to represent them in their meeting with the management, with a view to ending the deadlock. They now also helped the tramworkers to form their association. The importance of the strike of October 1920, lay in the fact that it led to the formation of Calcutta Tramways Employees Union (hereafter C T E U), the first union of the Calcutta Tramwaymen.²² Nisith Chandra Sen was the first President and Gayatri Prasad Choubey, a dismissed conductor, the first Secretary.²³

The Second Strike Days of Militancy

As days passed, the tramwaymen found to their chagrin that most of the decisions of the meeting of 3rd October had remained unimplemented. They began to think about another strike. On the 23rd of January, 1921, they placed a fresh charter of demands before the General Manager of the Company. The Charter included (1) fixation of eight hours as a working day and payment of overtime allowance for work done in excess,²⁴ (2) fixed monthly salary on a graduated scale with a minimum pay of Rs 30, (3) no introduction of any more extra hands till all men had been provided with permanent jobs, (4) fair distribution of work by the head starter, (5) introduction of a neutral enquiry in cases reported by flying checkers and inspectors, (6) granting of compassionate allowances in cases of accidents on duty, (7) introduction of casual and privilege leave, (8) opportunity to be given to a conductor to make good any shortage of cash, without his necessarily being suspected, (9) abolition of the forfeiture system except in cases where a man was found guilty of cheating by a Competent Court of justice, (10) no dismissal of any employee without an enquiry being conducted in his presence, (11) counting attendance in court as a witness of the Company as attendance on duty, and (12) free supply of overcoats in the winter season.²⁵

In the same Charter, the workers requested the General Manager to give his decision regarding these demands on or before the 25th of January, otherwise they would have to go on strike. Nowhere in the Charter was there any mention of C T E U or its office bearers. The address of its senders was given as Drivers and Conductors C/o Walter Mother, Nikaraparā, Tollygunge, the address of a tramwaymen's mess²⁶ and not 23 Wellington Street, which was the address of the C T E U office²⁷.

The management turned a deaf ear to the tramworkers' demands. The traffic staff of Calcutta tramways assembled in a meeting at Esplanade junction on 26th January, 1921. During this period Gandhi was in Calcutta. Being briefed about the condition of tramwaymen of Calcutta he decided to attend the meeting. Tramworkers waited for hours, but Gandhi did not turn up and diverted himself of the responsibility by sending a note of excuse²⁸. Why Gandhi did not attend the meeting of the tramworkers may be anybody's guess. However, it is possible to explain his absence in the context of his political stand vis-a-vis labour. In a letter to Shapurji Sakhlataia, a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Gandhi wrote

"Labour in India is still extremely unorganised. The labourers have no mind of their own when it comes to national policy or welfare of labour itself. It is highly provincial and even in the same city it is highly communal."²⁹

Notwithstanding Gandhi's absence, prominent Bengal Congressmen sought to influence the decision of the meeting and tried to avert a strike. The President of C T E U, N C Sen requested the men to settle the issue amicably and not to go in for a strike. But the workers refused to accept his proposal. N C Chunder also tried to convince the workers to stay away from a strike, but in vain. G P Chowdhury, another Congressman and at the same time a union office bearer also reminded the workers of the great distress associated with such a strike. The workers responded with "That we know". "Are you determined to go to a strike?" Chowdhury asked. "Yes, Yes" was the answer. "Are you prepared to go to jail?" Chowdhury persisted. The reply was again in the affirmative. The Congress leader then used the last weapon out of his arsenal. "Are you prepared to remain unemployed for two months or more?" Again, "Yes" was the answer of the thousands of workers assembled on the spot. The advice of the Bengal Congress leaders, "to settle down quietly" was rejected in unequivocal terms, and all the drivers and conductors shouted, "We shall strike from tomorrow morning and no first car shall leave the depot". Failing to persuade the workers to pull back from the strike decision, the President of the C T E U, N C Sen said, "As you have decided on striking all I can say to you is that there must be no *Zhoolum*, there must be no *marpeet*." A worker, present in the meeting immediately stood up and asked, "If anybody tries to take out a car?" "Hat joro, pai paro" (fold your hands and fall at their feet) was Sen's answer³⁰. But the events of the subsequent days would demonstrate that workers were never swayed by the advice of the non-violent president. They fought the betrayers and the blacklegs when the situation demanded.

The details of the meeting clearly show that the workers completely

differed from the Gandhite labour leaders on the means to fight out their cause. Thus the decision of going in for a strike in clear disregard of the Congress leaders' advice shows beyond doubt that the decision regarding their protest movements rested with the workers and not with Congress officials.

About 3,000 drivers and conductors struck work from 27th January, 1921. The President of C T E U expressed his regret at the occurrence of the strike and won the praise of the British bureaucracy for trying to induce the workers to "proceed constitutionally".¹¹

The Duke of Cannaught visited Calcutta on the 28th of January. Not a single tram was seen plying that day. The tram strike was described by the Government as a pre-planned one, aimed at disturbing the "Royal visit" and it was suspected that "local students and striking workers were being incited by the extremist organs of Calcutta". The same official communique lamented, "Gandhi's reiterated advice to learn Hindustani and use Charkha was not satisfying them (the striking workers and the students-author). Moreover local extremist organs are explaining that Gandhi's advice must not be taken too literally."¹² No evidence is available to corroborate this statement that tramwaymen's decision to go in for a strike at that specific moment was a pre-determined manoeuvre to upset the "Royal Visit". However, one cannot avoid the feeling that the tramwaymen, in the course of their struggle for better wage and improved working conditions, came to forge a link with the broader extremist politics of Bengal.

On 31st January, N C Sen, without taking consent from the striking workers opened a dialogue with the management. Sen requested the authorities to appoint a Committee consisting of two non-official Europeans and two members nominated by the Union.¹³ But his proposal was turned down. The management took a rigid stand and categorically stated that this strike was engineered by "ulterior motives" and lacked any genuine cause. The management however did not spell out whose "ulterior motives" precipitated this strike. Nor did Sen demand any clarification of the term. The management handed over to him the following statement:

"Unless the men come back to work, we are not prepared to discuss the matter. On no account can any further increase of pay be granted. We are prepared to reinstate all the men, with exception to driver no. 134."¹⁴

Having refused to accept even the modest proposal of the President of C T E U, the management resolved to break the strike with the help of black-legs. The Company began to recruit Anglo-Indian drivers and conductors at an exorbitant rate of Rs. 3 per day.¹⁵ This attempt of the Company to run cars at any cost met with stiff resistance from the strikers. The strike however continued amidst a few scuffles between the strikers and the black-legs in several depots.

The 11th day of February was an eventful one in many ways. Violence erupted in Nonapukur Depot, when the black legs tried to take out the cars in the morning. Strikers attacked the black legs. One such element, Ram Kamal

Bhattacharya, a conductor, was assaulted by the strikers. As the situation took a serious turn, the management communicated with the police headquarters. A strong police contingent was sent to counteract the working class violence. Massive lathi charge by the police brought the situation under control.

At about 5 P.M. on the same day, the strikers assembled in a meeting "to assess the position of the strike." The union leaders advised them to show restraint in the face of provocation. The strikers also pledged to persuade the men, who had broken away, to join them again. After the meeting tramwaymen paraded the Dhurmötala Street with shouts of "Gandhi Maharaja Ki Joy." Gandhi's launching of the Non-cooperation movement gave him a glorious image. Evidently, the tramwaymen of Calcutta belonged to that lot of fighters seen both in the industrial and agricultural sectors who, despite the fact that Gandhi did not encourage them, saw him nevertheless as a charismatic leader, a symbol of protest against oppression and indignation imposed by imperialist Raj.

The use of this slogan did not mean that the tramwaymen perceived Gandhian Non-Violence as an appropriate and sufficient means to fight the employer. The events in the Kalighat tram depot on 18th February provide ample evidence of this.¹⁸ The Company imported a large number of strike breakers to Kalighat depot on that day. The majority of the blacklegs, again, were Anglo-Indians. Incensed at finding the blacklegs, the strikers at Kalighat stopped the cars and pulled them out of driver's cabin. The blacklegs attacked the strikers with stones and bamboos snatched from nearby roofs. The strikers were taken aback and were pushed to the Shahebbagan Bustee, adjacent to the Kalighat tram depot. The impudence of the Anglo-Indians proved irksome to the slum dwellers, and they rallied on the side of the strikers. Thus reinforced, the tramworkers once again attacked the blacklegs with shouts of "Maro Sala Feringi Lokego" (Assail those bloody Anglo-Indians).¹⁹ A police contingent reached the troubled spot to rescue the blacklegs. Unheeding, the strikers, along with the slum people continued their attack on the blacklegs. A saigent van appeared on the scene and opened fire on the militant crowd. A tramworker was killed and several others including the slum people were injured.²⁰ This incident demonstrated that to the tramwaymen neither the peaceful strike, nor the leisurely petition to the management appeared as the most appropriate weapon to win their demands. To counter the highhandedness of the alien management, acts of violence by the workers tended to be the rule, rather than the exception, and trade disputes often tended to develop into riot situations.

In the eyes of the British bureaucracy, the residents of Shahebbagan were a "turbulent class of Mohammedans."²¹ In fact, Shahebbagan was a working class slum area, comprising mainly rickshaw pullers and daily wage earners, engaged in small industrial units in Calcutta and its suburbs. The toilers of Shahebbagan had recourse to violence only when they saw innocent strikers being manhandled by the black-legs. Their action evidently counters any lingering notions of the crowd as a mysterious, vague and hapazard

phenomenon, composed of social misfits and occurring almost by change ¹²

However, police firing in Kalighat created a sensation. On the next day (19th February), a debate was held in the Calcutta Corporation. The Corporation dominated by Congressmen, passed a resolution requesting the Government to take such steps as they might deem fit "to terminate the present deadlock and prevent such deadlocks in near future" ¹¹. The Government immediately entered into communication with the parties to the dispute. On 23rd February, it was settled that men at strike should return to work on the next day and that the Company should announce its decision on tramway men's charter of 23rd January, 1921. In case the Company's decision failed to satisfy the workers, the Government would constitute a Committee to investigate their grievances ¹¹. Thus the strike came to an end and the streets of Calcutta again heard the clamour of tram cars on 24th February, after twenty-seven days ¹¹.

The Company's decision stated that all the workers excepting driver no 134 would be allowed to continue their service and the Company would make a proper investigation of their grievances ¹⁶. The tramway men naturally thought that these decisions evaded the vital issues and refused to accept them. The Government immediately set up a Committee known as the Calcutta Tramways Strike Committee. The members of the Committee were D B Meek, Director of Industries (Chairman of the Committee), R S Watson Smith, President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Byomkesh Chakravarti, Rai Chuni Lal Bose Bahadur, Sheriff of Calcutta, and G H W Davies, I C S ¹⁷.

Among these members only Byomkesh Chakravarti, a Congressman and a rich barrister was the representative of the workers. The Committee made certain recommendations, the majority of which went in favour of the Company. The Committee's report categorically stated "We do not feel justified in recommending any change in the present scale of pay". It further recommended that "all power regarding dismissal, suspension and forfeiture of deposit will remain with the Company, though it added vaguely that the Company should deal with such cases with "careful consideration". So far as workers' interest was concerned, it recommended a nine-hour working day, instead of twelve hours and 3 weeks' annual leave with half pay. Regarding other grievances the Committee remained silent as "they were not pressed by the representatives of men" ¹⁸. The Committee did not take any clear stand regarding the reinstatement of the dismissed driver no 134. Interestingly enough, even the C T E U also kept silent about this dismissal. The drivers and conductors of Calcutta tramways, who kept the strike going for nearly a month, were so exhausted by the insolence of the Company on the one hand and the irresponsibility of the C T E U leader on the other, that they had no alternative but to accept the recommendations of the Committee and resume work, leaving behind them their retrenched comrade, the driver no 134.

Despite the failure of the strike, its importance should not be

minimised, the Calcutta tramwaymen had not only fought against systematic repression by their white employers, but had done so untiedly and unhesitatingly even against the advice of Congress leaders, who posed as the non-violent well wishers of the workers. Moreover, like many other strikes of the period, this strike also horrified the ruling class with the spectre of Bolshevism.¹⁹

The Third Strike Repression and Aftermath

Once the strike of early 1921 came to an end, the Company began a double-edged policy. At first, the minimum pay of the drivers and conductors was raised from Rs. 19 to Rs. 24.50 which delighted the workers. Then the Company started a policy of unleashing repression upon the workers, with redoubled energy. In August, 1921, the management dismissed seventy conductors for alleged dishonesty. The order was summed up thus: the "notorious" conductors were retrenched "for pocketing pice, without issuing tickets".²¹ Strangely enough not a single enquiry was held before this decision was taken. In fact, all the retrenched conductors had played a leading role in their action against the Company in early '21. The tramwaymen viewed this vindictive act of the Company with great concern and requested that the order be revoked and the entire matter examined "with careful consideration". But the Company turned a deaf ear to the workmen's plea.

On the 4th September, tram drivers and conductors assembled in a meeting and decided to strike from the 5th to protest against such unlawful retrenchment.²² The C T E U leaders thus far had not executed their duties to pressurise the management to bring the dismissed workers back. But in this meeting they made their presence felt, again by trying to induce the workers not to go in for a strike immediately, which would mean a "terrible inconvenience to the travelling public" of Calcutta.²³ The members of the Traffic staff of Calcutta Tramways, however, again launched a strike, "in defiance of the advice of the President of C T E U" on 5th September.²⁴

The strike caused complete disarray in city transport for two days (5th and 6th September). On the 6th night the President of the C T E U met the strikers and urged them to return to work.²⁵ He again reminded them of the evil consequences they might have to face for participating in the strike. Tramwaymen were already dejected at the unhappy ending of the strike of February 1921. Moreover, the sudden dismissal of their fellow workers in August came as a severe blow and threatened their job security. The Government and the Company not only condemned this strike, they also tried to break it at any cost. Black-legs were imported on an unprecedented scale to keep the trams moving. The situation was such that even the Employees' Association of Calcutta, an organisation of middle class and white collar employees of different units, in a resolution, urged the Bengali youths "not to be enlisted as black-legs and deprive living of thousands of tramway employees summarily dismissed by the Company".²⁶ The situation however showed no signs of improvement so far as the tramwaymen were concerned. At this stage C T E U President's constant harping on the theme of

impending danger as the outcome of their strike unnerved the workers, and they began to lose hope. On the 7th, there was partial resumption of work. Within two or three days, almost all the workers returned to work unconditionally.⁵⁷

By this time, some individuals in India had already established their links with the Communist International and Moscow, and some of the tramwaymen came in contact with such individuals. This is testified to by a pamphlet received by the management of the Company during the strike of September, 1921. The pseudonym of the author of the pamphlet was "Communist". The pamphlet read

"Ye of the well fed and comfortable class We do not threaten. We warn. We indulge neither in vain hopes nor in craven despair. We seek to make sure. We take our stand by the side of those whom capitalism has cast out. We say of them and for them—these are flesh and blood even as Ye. Because they are flesh and blood, they have as much right as anybody to be fed, clothed and sheltered with honour and dignity. They have right of an opportunity to repay the cost of their keep (as all men should) by labour useful to their fellowmen. You, who by incompetence, callousness, cupidity or neglect, debar them from this right are guilty of crime against them

"It is the consequence of your crime, which confronts you today."⁵⁸

Years of Tranquility and Transition . 1922-1927.

Tramwaymen's protest against retrenchment could not gain much ground and their unconditional resumption of work in September, 1921 naturally enthused the management. The management struck again by retrenching at least three hundred workers towards the end of 1921.⁵⁹ But this time not a single protest of the workers confronted the Company. In fact workngmen's sad experience in their struggle against the management gave their hopes and aspirations a staggering blow. Hence the years succeeding 1921 were largely eventless for the tramwaymen of Calcutta. During these years of apparent lull, while still despising the colonial Government and their British employers, they also developed a mistrust of the nationalist leaders and union office bearers. The C T E U gradually went defunct.

Meanwhile, on the national scene, a great change was taking place. The rising tide of workingclass movement in different parts of India in the early 20s compelled the Government to enact certain liberal labour laws. One such important enactment was the Indian Trade Union Act of 1926, which allowed any seven persons of a Company or concern to form a registered trade union.⁶⁰ In 1927, the Indian Trade Union Act led to the reorganisation of the C T E U under a new name, Calcutta Tramways Workers' Union (hereafter CTWU).⁶¹ The change in the name and office bearers suggested the influence of communists. In July 1924, the Communist International had decided that a new Communist Party should be formed in India, as one of its branches. Accordingly, the first Conference of the Indian Communists was held in Kanpur in December, 1925.⁶² Bhupendranath Dutta, a doyen of the Marxist theoreticians in India was the President of C.T.W.U. and Sibnath

Banerjee, a socialist leader, who had developed some links with communists abroad in the early years of his political career its Secretary.⁶³ In 1927, the new C T W U was affiliated to AITUC.

Tramwaymen's experience with the C T E U leaders in early 20s still haunted them and in the beginning they looked upon the new leaders with similar distrust. But a section of the tramwaymen realised that the new comers were different from their earlier leaders. Within that year, the membership of the new union rose to 800.⁶⁴

The Communist Party of India which during this period acted as a segment in the broad platform of the Indian National Congress, functioned in Bengal within the Bengal Workers' and Peasant Party (BWPP). The BWPP leaders were trying to organise the working class of different industrial sectors. As a part of their programme, they worked to bring the tramwaymen under their influence. The workers, who lost their jobs in 1921 acted as an auxiliary force in this effort of the BWPP leaders. A large number of those sacked workers had not left Calcutta. Some of them now worked in small industrial units while some others earned their living as pedlars. These men did not sever links with their old comrades, who still worked in the Calcutta Tramways. When in 1927 the BWPP leaders contacted these people, they readily acted as the link between the BWPP and the tramworkers. One such worker was Kali Shom, a driver, discharged in 1921, whose unrelenting efforts to associate the tramwaymen with BWPP is still remembered by Dhiren Majumdar, one of the founding leader of the C T W U.⁶⁵ Thus the penetration of communist ideology within the tramwaymen was facilitated through the dismissed workers' efforts.

The number of C T W U members was 800 in 1927. True that, the enrolment of 800 men or only 13.3 per cent of the Company's 6,000 employees did not present a very rosy picture for the new union, but in the very year of its inception even this was no mean a task.⁶⁶

The Simon Commission - Acid Test of the New Union

The coming of the Simon Commission in early 1928 came as a test case for the new union. The British Government appointed the Indian Statutory Commission; known popularly after the name of its Chairman as Simon Commission, in November 1927 to go into the question of further constitutional reforms. The Commission was due to arrive in India on 3rd February 1928. All the members of the Commission were Englishmen and reflected a racist arrogance which hurt the dignity and national sentiment of the Indians. In January, John Simon received a letter from S S Mirajakar, a pioneer of the Bombay communists—in which the latter branded the Commission as a "gang of robbers".⁶⁷ On the 11th January a mass meeting held under the auspices of Bombay Municipal Workmen's Union resolved to observe "a universal strike in all departments of the Municipality on the day of arrival" of the Commission.⁶⁸ Marxist radicals like Nimbkar, Dange, Ranadive, etc., were closely associated with this union. In the middle of January, the All Parties Conference unanimously decided that the Simon

Commission must be "left severely alone" by the people of India. It appealed to the people to observe a "hartal" on the 3rd February, all over the country from morning to 4.30 P.M. in the evening.⁷⁰ Shapurji Saklatvala, a communist member in the British Parliament who also had close links with Indian communists, thundered in the House that the Commission was being sent with a view "to perpetuate the imperial rule in India." He also hailed the decision of the All Party Conference to boycott the Commission and observe a hartal on the day of its arrival.⁷¹ From the available evidence, it seems clear that the Communists in India too, along with other political parties, demonstrated their opposition to the all-white Commission.

Accordingly, the BWPP set itself the task of making the 'hartal' a grand success.⁷² The leaders of C.T.W.U. put up a tireless effort to mobilise the tramworkers against the Commission and the tramwaymen of Calcutta did not lag behind in their struggle against British imperialism. In the meeting of 22nd January, 1928 in Calcutta Maidan, held under the auspices of C.T.W.U., tramworkers expressed their willingness to observe hartal on 3rd February.⁷³

The Calcutta Tramways Company, when it heard of the hartal programme of the tramwaymen, proceeded to tackle it with its usual brutality. The Company put up a notice in its Head Office, stating clearly that any worker who remained absent on the 3rd February will be summarily dismissed. The Company also arranged to keep the drivers and conductors forcibly confined in their respective depots during the night of 2nd February.

On the day before the proposed 'hartal' a conductor was caught by the Traffic Superintendent for distributing leaflets among the workers, which appealed for a boycott of the Simon Commission. The Traffic Superintendent immediately took away the leaflets and trampled upon them. Within a few minutes he put up a fresh notice, at the Company's Head Office, threatening once again that absence from work on the 3rd would result in dismissal. But the notice was torn up by the angry tramworkers, leading to the consequent dismissal of two conductors.⁷⁴

In the evening of the 2nd February police and military forces heavily guarded all the important depots of Calcutta and Howrah and prevented every member of the traffic staff from leaving the depot after duty hours. Evidently, this proved irksome to the workers, but they could do nothing and had to stay in the depots.⁷⁵ As the morning broke in Calcutta on the 'hartal' day, there was a strange scene on the roads. Tramcars containing tramworkers and armed policemen were plying along the rails. The tramworkers had been compelled at gunpoints to keep the cars running.⁷⁶

But not all of them even the threat of force failed to goad the men at Kalighat depot and Tollgunge depot to work. At the Kalighat depot, leaders of the C.T.W.U. spoke to the men about the ulterior motives of the Simon Commission and their political implication. The police attempt to terrorise them

to run cars was evidently a failure as not a single car went out of the depot. At Tollygunge depot, the men resisted the blacklegs who came to run cars. When the police came to the defence of the blacklegs, there was a show-down between the police and the tramwaymen. The police opened fire on men, killed two and injured at least thirty. S. N. Banerjee, the CTWU Secretary soon appeared on the scene and condemned the police action. The police at first gave him a rough treatment and then arrested him.⁷⁹

On the 4th February, the Company dismissed four workers and suspended many others, allegedly for creating disturbance on the 3rd February. It also declared that those who did not join the strike would be rewarded.⁸⁰ Somnath Lahiri, an early communist in Bengal, who associated himself with the CTWU for a considerable length of time, depicted the tale of police repression on the tram workers during the anti-Simon agitation, in his short story "Akabaka". The story reveals how the company rewarded the blacklegs, as a token of gratitude, who went all out to foil the political stirrings of the working class.⁸¹

This political struggle of the workers was not to be erased easily from the minds of the management. H. R. Dain, a high Company Official, in his statement before the Royal Commission on Labour in India, in 1930 expressed grave concern over the fact that though there was not a single strike in the recent years, there was indeed a "hartal", i.e., the 'hartal' of 3rd February, 1928. A member of the Commission asked Dain to clarify the difference between 'hartal' and a strike. Dain replied that "strikes" occurred as a consequence of "trade disputes", "but there is no trade dispute involved in a 'Hartal'".⁸²

Though the tramworkers' protest movement against the Simon Commission was brutally suppressed, they discovered that unlike the leaders of the early 20s, the leaders of CTWU did not shake off their responsibility by condemning the militancy of the strikers. When the tramworkers faced the onslaught of the state, these leaders stood by their side and unhesitatingly faced torture and imprisonment. They lost their battle against the Company and the state on the issue of Simon Commission. It was a set back no doubt, but they were convinced that such setbacks were necessary stepping stones for marching towards a better future.

The Remaining Years .

The BWPP not only worked hard to emerge as the vanguard of the tramwaymen but also tried to involve them in various forms of political activities. Tramwaymen were active participants in the striking demonstration of the Calcutta working class in December, 1928, led by the BWPP.⁸³ The workers, while marching towards the Congress session in Park Circus, were manhandled by the Bengal Volunteers,⁸⁴ and "it is said Subhash Bose, 'GOC' of the volunteers, even wanted to call in the police".⁸⁵ The objective of the workers was to appeal to the Congress leaders to support their modest demand for reduction of working hours, stopping retrenchment in different industries and a resolution for Purna Swaraj.⁸⁶ This in fact was an eye opener for the

workers, and many of them including the tramwaymen began to give a fresh thought to the attitude of Congress leaders towards the working class.⁸⁷ From an official note it is known that Subhash Bose was trying to extend his influence over the tramwaymen of Calcutta towards the end of the 20s, but received very little response.⁸⁸

In 1929, the Government of India being apprehensive of Communist activities throughout India, framed the Meerut Conspiracy Case and arrested a number of labour leaders, including some British communists. CTWU Secretary, Sibnath Banerjee was among those arrested. On 21st April, 1929, the meeting of the CTWU, under the presidentship of an early communist, Bankim Mukherjee, condemned the Meerut Conspiracy Case and expressed sympathy for the arrested leaders.⁸⁹ Despite poor attendance at the meeting, it was a demonstration of working class solidarity and the tramwaymen's growing political maturity.

After the arrest of Sibnath Banerjee, P. K. Sanyal acted as Secretary of the CTWU. The third decade of the 20th century ended for the tramwaymen of Calcutta, with concern expressed by P. K. Sanyal over the small number of unionised tram workers. In a meeting of the tram workers, on 29th December, 1929, he stressed the necessity of joining the CTWU.⁹⁰

Some General Observations

Some important points emerge from our study of Calcutta tramwaymen's movement in the 1920s. Among the total body of tram workers the drivers and conductors who had to deal with the urban population in their daily life, were undoubtedly the leading elements. Incidentally, the strikes of early 20s were launched by them, with marginal support from men in Non-apukur workshop. Members of the traffic staff, particularly the retrenched drivers and conductors, were instrumental in forming a new union in 1927 led by the communists. Most members of the new union came from the traffic section. During the anti-Simon phase of the nationalist struggle, it was the drivers and conductors who initiated the struggle among the tramwaymen. Repression thus fell heavily on them. The reason behind their militancy was possibly their bargaining strength. Their bargaining position was exceptionally strong, as they could bring the traffic system to a standstill whenever they wanted. A comparison with Hobsbawm's findings on labour protests would not be out of place here. In the British Gas industry, a similar bargaining position was enjoyed by the stokers and firemen, whose services were indispensable to the industry. These stokers and firemen formed the most active and politically conscious workers in the British Gas industry.⁹¹ In Britain as well as in other countries in Europe the most militant and politically advanced elements among the toiling people came from the skilled craftsmen.⁹²

Tramways being a public utility were a focus of public concern and public opinion. As it was a British Company, the people of Calcutta saw its workers' movement not as an isolated case of employees' agitation against the management but as a united struggle of the Indians against British

imperialism In the course of our discussion, we have seen that the Calcuttians were ready to help the striking workers whenever the situation so demanded The slum dwellers of Sahebbágan came as their saviours, when they were attacked by the Anglo-Indian blacklegs and Company-hired hoodlums The middle class of Calcutta through its Employees' Association appealed to the Bengali youths not to serve the Company's interests by joining it as blacklegs Tramways being the fulcrum of city transport in the 20s, a strike of its workers meant an insuperable difficulty for the middle class employees in Calcutta, yet the Calcuttians extended their support to the cause of the strikers and not a single manifestation of public wrath against the strikers was visible⁸³ Tramwaymen's bargaining strength was undoubtedly derived in a large measure from this

The eventful 1920s provided the basis for a stronger trade union of the tramworkers in the late 1930s and 1940s In the course of their struggle against the management as well as against the state machinery, they were involved in the process of selecting and rejecting their vanguards The Congress leadership consisting of philanthropists largely devoid of any positive policy which could cater to the workingclass interests, was summarily rejected by the Calcutta Tramwaymen in the wake of the employers' offensive The continuous struggle waged by the working class created the necessity for a more radical organisation that would ensure its effectiveness

Our study is also of relevance in the context of the debates which have recently taken place on the analysis of working class struggles⁸⁴ Working class struggles have been perceived often within a syndrome of struggle-consciousness-defeat Such a perception not only negates the struggle-setback-struggle syndrome but also identifies temporary setbacks as 'defeats' emerging out of structural constraints within the working-class rather than a higher level of tactical combativeness of the ruling class Tramwaymen's movements in the early 1920s ended with retrenchment, hunger and wretchedness but perhaps also with hope Their protest against the Simon Commission marked only the beginning of organised and more developed struggles of the CTWU in subsequent years Days of glorious struggles in the 1940s provided an answer to the poor tramwaymen's dream of the 1920s

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- 22 Sisir Mitra "Whose labour makes the wheel Turn ?" In *Marxist Miscellany*, No 8, June P 57 Also Secret Report—Op Cit File No 17/20 Home Department (Political) Government of India N A
- 23 Panchanan Saha *History of Working-class Movement in Bengal*, New Delhi, 1978, P 221
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- 27 Panchanan Saha, *Op Cit*
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- 34 *Ibid*
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- 37 *Ibid*

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- 39 *Home Department (Political) Police*, Government of Bengal, File No P 5-R-9 Progs No 35-44, July 1921, (W B S A)
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V.B. TULASIDHAR**

Limit to Non-Inflationary Deficit Spending

IN THE PLANNING process government expenditure has increased several-fold over the pre-plan level. This expansion in government expenditure has been financed mostly by mobilising resources through tax and non tax sources, market borrowings and deficit financing defined in terms of money creation. These different sources of financing expenditure can be expected to have a differential impact on sectoral output and on the price level. Financing through taxation involves withdrawal of purchasing power from the household sector and of investable resources from the corporate sector. The inflationary impact, through the demand side, of this mode of finance depends on the net additional demand generated in different sectors by the combined influence of a withdrawal of funds and of government expenditure on the one hand and the availability of excess capacities in the affected sectors, on the other. Besides, taxation may also lead to cost push inflation through forward shifting of taxes. Similarly, mobilisation of funds through internal market borrowing may also lead to a crowding out of private funds owing to a liquidity crunch. The effect of this mode of finance on sectoral output and inflation is difficult to determine. Ideally, while examining the inflationary impact of increased government expenditure, the total effect of various modes of financing the expenditure should be considered along with the demand implication of the expenditure programmes. In this paper, however, we have taken up the limited issue of price effects of one of the modes of financing additional government expenditure, namely deficit financing. We examine this issue with reference to the Union Government expenditure for 1971-72 in the inter-industry consistency framework.

It is widely held that deficit financing as a source of financing government expenditure invariably leads to inflation through generation of excess demand. In contrast to this widely held view, we have argued that an increase in government expenditure financed through deficit financing need not necessarily lead to inflation in an economy like India's where several manufacturing sectors are known to be characterised by excess capacity and that it can happen only if there is non-compatibility between the composi-

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tion of sectoral demand generated directly and indirectly by an increase in government expenditure, and the structure of the excess capacity obtaining in the economy. We have attempted here, to indicate empirically the level to which deficit spending can be pushed up without causing inflation and also to identify the sectors through which inflation gains its momentum. For our exposition we have divided the paper into three sections. In the immediately following section we briefly discuss the data and the methodology used for the exercise. In section 2, we discuss the results of the study. In the final section we highlight the major conclusions and attempt to relate them, to the extent possible, to more recent time situation.

I To carry out this exercise we require to know the structure of sectoral direct demand generated by the Union Government expenditure. Given the direct demand, we have to estimate the induced demand generated in the

TABLE I
Direct Commodity Requirement of Union Government
Expenditure of Rs 100 (At producers' prices)

Sector No	Name	Commodity Purchases	Salary Disbursals	Combined Expenditure
1	Agriculture	2 512	38 784	16 836
2	Mining	4 608	0 419	2 953
3	Food Products	1 356	12 982	5 947
4	Textile Products	3 629	4 971	4 160
5	Wood Products	0 076	0 342	0 180
6	Paper & Printing	0 995	0 644	0 856
7	Leather Products	0 075	0 319	0 172
8	Rubber & Petro Products	2 758	0 807	1 988
9	Chemicals	1 456	1 391	1 430
10	Non-metallic Minerals	0 173	0 284	0 217
11	Metals & Metal Products	3 366	0 419	2 202
12	Non Electrical Machinery	4 410	0 137	2 723
13	Electrical Machinery	6 833	1 027	4 541
14	Transport Equipment	18 261	1 246	11 541
15	Other Industries	4 831	1 568	3 543
16	Electricity	2 366	1 694	2 096
17	Construction	27 135	6 665	19 051
18	Rly Transport	9 067	3 373	6 819
19	Other Transport	1 701	2 655	2 078
20	Other Services	4 390	20 281	10 666
		100 0	100 0	100 0

Leontief-Keynesian propagation processes so as to examine the excess demand implications of the direct plus induced demand on different sectors. In order to do this, we need to ascertain the structure of excess capacities in different sectors. The data and the methodology used for making these estimates are discussed below.

It should be noted at the outset that we have used for estimates of the sectoral composition of the Union Government expenditure on commodity purchases and salary disbursement for the financial year 1971-72¹. The composition of government demand as shown in terms of the distribution of the government expenditure of Rs 100 each on commodity purchases and salary disbursements over 20 sectors is shown in Table 1.

Then we have estimated the total sectoral—direct and indirect—requirements of the commodity purchases and salary disbursements separately using a semi-closed input-output model with a condensed 20 sector version of the Fifth Plan domestic matrix as its core.² Our model while endogenising consumption incorporates the rural-urban differences in income propagation across sectors and relates them to consumption behaviour observed in respective areas. As a result of this, the derived consumption becomes sensitive to areawise income distribution.³ The total sectoral—direct plus induced—demand generated by a government expenditure of Rs 100 on commodities or salary disbursements or on both in each of the 20 sectors has been estimated and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the level and the patterns of direct and induced sectoral demand requirement is very much different for the commodity and salary components of the government expenditure. Although both the components of the combined expenditure generate the maximum amount of total demand in the agriculture sector, salary disbursements generate almost twice as much as the amount of demand generated by commodity purchases. A given expenditure on these two components generates more or less the same amount of demand in Textiles, Wood products, Paper products, Chemicals, Electricity and other transport. Thus the demand pressure on these sectors will be the same for any compositional changes between commodity purchases and salary disbursements. Commodity purchases generate substantially more demand in Rubber and Petroleum products, Non-Metallic minerals, Metal products, Non-electrical and Electrical machinery, Transport equipment and Railway transport sectors, which in turn means that any expenditure on programmes involving relatively less salary payments puts pressure on the above sectors as compared to programmes involving substantial amount of salary payments such as social services. The direct plus induced demand pattern of the combined expenditure reflects the weighted average of commodity purchases and salary disbursements observed in 1971-72.

Having estimated the structure of the total sectoral requirement, we have to get the structure of excess capacities for the same year. For the manufacturing sectors, we have used the information on excess capacities estimated in one recent study⁴ for the year 1971-72. These estimates have

TABLE II
Direct plus induced sectorial demand requirement
of Union Government Expenditure of Rupees 100

Sector No	Name	Commodity Purchases (Rs)	Salary Disbursals (Rs)	Combined Expenditure (Rs)
1	Agriculture	70.24	-----	-----
2	Mining	8.39	3.32	6.37
3	Food Products	20.79	39.20	28.08
4	Textile Products	21.04	28.53	24.32
5	Wood Products	2.45	2.86	2.54
6	Paper & Printing	3.28	3.08	3.23
7	Leather Products	0.61	0.97	0.72
8	Rubber & Petro Products	10.96	5.55	8.77
9	Chemicals	11.49	12.13	11.73
10	Non-metallic Minerals	7.03	4.67	6.29
11	Metals & Metal Products	20.09	8.55	15.51
12	Non Electrical Machinery	5.25	0.49	3.35
13	Electrical Machinery	11.06	3.97	8.26
14	Transport Equipment	25.75	4.29	17.31
15	Other Industries	7.10	4.19	17.31
16	Electricity	9.93	8.70	9.47
17	Construction	35.81	16.74	28.38
18	Rly Transport	16.14	11.46	14.32
19	Other Transport	9.30	10.39	9.76
20	Other Services	56.24	80.51	65.83
		362.0	402.4	377.9

been made using the peak-output method. As is well known, the estimates made on the basis of this method are generally on the lower side. For most of the non-manufacturing sectors, the concept of excess capacity as understood in the manufacturing sectors is not applicable. But it is to be recognised that the output of non-manufacturing sectors cannot be expanded beyond a particular limit at least in the short run. Keeping this in view, we have defined the 'available capacity' in each of these sectors as their base (1971-72) level output multiplied by their respective observed annual average growth rates during 1970-76. This definition has a limitation particularly when applied to agriculture where the output depends on random factors and fluctuates violently.

The sectoral gross output data for non-manufacturing sectors are available only for the year 1973-74. On the basis of the data we have estimated the

base year (1971-72) output for Agriculture, Mining and Electricity sectors using the output deflators given by RBI⁶ and for Construction, Railway transport, Other transport and other services using the average annual growth rates for the period 1970-76 given in one study⁷. The available capacity thus estimated along with the excess capacities in manufacturing sectors as estimated in the study referred to are presented in Table 3

TABLE III
Sectoral Excess capacities 1971-72

		Gross output in 1971-72 (Rs million)	Growth rate %	Excess/available capacity 1971-72 (Rs million)
1	Agriculture	258098.4	2.91	7510.6 [*]
2	Mining	5271.7	4.09	215.6 [*]
3	Food Products	—	—	6620.5+
4	Textiles	—	—	6620.5+
5	Wood Products	—	—	180.5+
6	Paper & Printing	—	—	401.8+
7	Leather Products	—	—	258.4+
8	Rubber Products	—	—	1540.9+
9	Chemical	—	—	5065.4+
10	Non-metallic minerals	—	—	392.1+
11	Metals and Metal Products	—	—	4836.6+
12	Non-electrical machinery	—	—	4753.2+
13	Electrical Machinery	—	—	1588.9+
14	Trans. Equipment	—	—	5007.7+
15	Other Industries	—	—	484.9+
16	Electricity	9338.3	3.52	328.7 [*]
17	Construction	46580.3	2.11	982.8 [*]
18	Rly Transport	11191.2	3.68	411.8 [*]
19	Other Transport	13429.2	4.87	654.0 [*]
20	Other Services	118726	2.41	2873.2 [*]

Source * Estimated See text

+ Javashree Shah, see footnote 4

* Bakul H. Dholakia see footnote 7

It can be argued that the limit to non-inflationary spending is set by the extent of imbalance in the structure of the excess capacity levels of different sectors in relation to the demand pattern generated by a given level of deficit spending and the availability of foreign exchange. When the level of deficit spending on commodity purchases or on salary disbursements or on both is raised, one or more of the sector's output may reach full capacity level and emerge as 'critical' sectors. As long as these critical sectors are tradable goods

sectors, the excess demand generated in these sectors through deficit spending can be eased out by imports if one assumes away the bottleneck of foreign exchange. But this policy option gets closed as soon as the capacity limit of some of the non-tradable goods sectors such as Electricity, Railway transport etc. is reached thereby putting a severe constraint on the expansion of output. In other words, the capacity levels of non-tradable sectors sets the limit for non-inflationary deficit spending unless the excess demand in these sectors is met by expanding their outputs.

In order to ascertain the stage at which each of the sectors becomes critical, additional total government expenditure necessary to achieve full capacity utilization in the respective sectors has been estimated separately for expenditure on commodity purchases, salary disbursements and both combined in the following manner

$$\sum_j [z_{ij} g_j] = k_i$$

Denoting the elements of Leontiff inverse of the semi-closed model by z_{ij} and the proportion of government expenditure on the j th sectors as g_j we get where k_i is the direct plus induced demand generated by a rupee of a particular type of government expenditure in the i th sector. If X_i is the excess capacity available in the i th sector, where G_i^* gives the additional total government expenditure necessary to achieve full capacity utilization in the i -th sector. Separate estimates of G_i^* for additional government expenditure on commodities, on salaries and both combined are presented in Table 4.

$$X_i/K_i = G_i^*$$

II

As indicated in the preceding paragraph, we have estimated the level of additional government expenditure on commodity purchases, or on salary disbursements or on both combined that will be required to reach the full capacity level of a sector. The results that are presented in Table 4 show that the capacity levels of different sectors are attained at varying levels of additional government expenditure. For example, the full capacity limit of Railway transport is reached at Rs 255.1 crore of additional government expenditure if it is entirely made on commodity purchases and at Rs 359.3 crore if it is expended on salary disbursements. On the other hand, the capacity level of Nonelectrical machinery sector is attained at a very high level of additional government expenditure (Rs 9054 crore) if it is entirely made on commodity purchases and Rs 14189 crore when both commodity purchases and salary disbursements are taken together (combined expenditure). This range of variations in additional government expenditure required to reach the capacity levels of the different sectors clearly indicates the extent of imbalance in the pattern of government demand and the structure of excess

TABLE IV
Level of government expenditure required to completely utilise
the excess capacity in different sectors (Rupees Crores)

Sector No	Name	Commodity purchases	Salary Disbursals	Combined Expenditure
1	Agriculture	959.9	491.6	696.8
2	Mining	257.0	649.5	338.5
3	Food Products	3184.5	1688.9	2357.7
4	Textile Products	4157.7	3066.2	3497.0
5	Wood Products	736.7	631.1	710.6
6	Paper & Printing	1234.1	1314.3	1253.3
7	Leather Products	4236.1	2663.9	3588.9
8	Rubber & Petro Products	1405.9	2776.4	1757.0
9	Chemicals	4409.5	4175.9	4318.3
10	Non-Metal Products	557.8	849.6	623.4
11	Metals & Metals Products	2407.5	5656.8	3118.4
12	Non-Elect Machinery	9053.7	97004.1	14188.4
13	Electrical Machinery	1436.6	4002.2	1923.6
14	Transport charges	1944.7	11673.0	2893.0
15	Other industries	683.0	1157.3	815.0
16	Electricity	331.0	377.8	347.1
17	Construction	273.4	587.1	346.3
18	Railway Transport	255.1	359.3	287.6
19	Other Transport	703.2	629.5	670.1
20	Other Services	510.9	356.9	436.5

capacities. More important, the capacity limits of the non-tradable sectors such as Railway transport, Electricity and Construction are reached at a fairly low level of additional government expenditure, no matter whether it is entirely expended on commodity purchases or on salary disbursals.

Among the tradable sectors, Mining and Nonmetallic mineral products in the case of commodity purchases and Agriculture in the case of salary disbursals reach critical levels at a moderate level of additional expenditure. In most of the remaining sectors, almost unattainable additional government expenditure is required to reach full capacity levels. It means that these sectors on their own may not face an excess demand situation with the expansion of government expenditure.

Given this scenario, non-inflationary expansion of government spending through deficit financing is feasible only if the available capacity of the non-tradable sectors can be increased over and above the growth rates implicit in our capacity estimates. In addition, foreign exchange should be available to meet the excess demand in the constraining tradable goods sec-

tors, and also to meet induced import demand generated by additional government expenditure. We examine these issues below postulating an incremental percentage change in combined commodity and salary expenditure.

The excess demand generated in different sectors by different levels of additional spending expressed as a percentage of the total government expenditure in 1971-72 and the growth rates and foreign exchange needed to overcome the excess demand are shown in Table 5. The table shows that none of the sectors becomes critical upto 4 per cent of additional spending made over and above the 1971-72 levels of the Union Government spending. Railways emerged as a constraining sector at 5 per cent level of additional expenditure, which can be overcome if its output growth is pegged to 4.29 per cent. At this level, the foreign exchange requirement to meet induced import demand works out at Rs. 27.5 crore.

Three more sectors viz. Mining, Electricity and Construction become critical at 6 per cent level of additional expenditure. Two of them are non-excess demand in nontradable sectors, work out at 5.15 per cent for Railway transport, 4.08 per cent for Electricity and 2.45 per cent for Construction, and the foreign exchange requirement for direct and induced import demand is Rs. 37 crore. Similarly, with an increase of additional expenditure going up to 7 per cent of the combined government expenditure, Services sectors also face excess demand situation in addition to the four other sectors—three non-tradable and one tradable goods sector which face an excess demand at a lower percentage growth of additional expenditure. In short, as the additional expenditure, as a percentage of the combined government expenditure, increases new sectors get added to the list of constraining sectors and higher rates of growth of non-tradables become necessary to meet the excess demand while more imports are required to ease out the excess demand for tradable goods sectors. In fact, when the expenditure is increased by 12 per cent of the base period expenditure level, as many as nine sectors—five non-tradable and four tradable goods sectors including Agriculture—face the prospect of excess demand necessitating growth of output in the range of 6 per cent, for Services, to 10 per cent, for Railway transport sector. The direct and induced import requirements stand at Rs. 226 crore as compared to Rs. 77 crore at 10 per cent level of additional expenditure.

III

The major conclusions that emerge from the foregoing analysis are as follows. Given the pattern of government expenditure, the structure of the Indian economy and that of excess capacities of different sectors as obtained in 1971-72, deficit spending up to a level of 4 per cent of Union Government expenditure in the base year does not release inflationary pressure through the generation of excess demand for any of the sectors in the economy. In this range of deficit spending, the foreign exchange requirement for easing out

TABLE V
Identification of the Sectors facing excess demand at different
rates of increase in additional Government Expenditure on Commodities and Salaries Combined

Additional Expenditure as a % of Central Government Expenditure* (1971-72)	Critical Sectors	Excess Demand in non-tradables Rs Crores	Growth rate required to overcome the excess demand	Excess demand in tradable goods Rs Crores	Induced Foreign exchange requirement Rs Crores	Total Foreign exchange requirement Rs Crores
1	Nil	—	—	—	5.5	5.5
3	Nil	—	—	—	16.5	16.5
4	Nil	—	—	—	22.0	22.0
5	Railways	6.8	4.29	—	27.5	27.5
6	Railways	16.5	5.15	—	—	—
	Mining	—	—	4.0	33.0	37.0
	Electricity	5.3	4.08	—	—	—
	Construction	16.1	2.45	—	—	—
	Railways	26.1	6.01	—	38.5	46.7
7	Mining	—	—	8.2	—	—
	Electricity	11.7	4.77	—	—	—
	Construction	35.1	2.86	—	—	—
	Services	154.4	3.72	—	—	—
	Railways	84.9	8.59	—	55.0	79.1
10	Mining	—	—	21.0	—	—
	Electricity	30.7	6.80	—	—	—
	Construction	92.2	4.08	—	—	—
	Services	154.4	3.72	—	—	—
	Non-Metallic Minerals	—	—	3.0	—	—
	Railways	74.1	10.3	—	66.0	226.3
12	Mining	—	—	29.7	—	—
	Electricity	43.4	8.17	—	—	—
	Construction	130.3	4.90	—	—	—
	Services	242.8	4.46	—	—	—
	Non-metallic Minerals	—	—	11.4	—	—
	Other Transport	13.2	5.85	—	—	—
	Agriculture	—	—	116.8	—	—
	Wood products	—	—	2.4	—	—

*The total Central Government Expenditure net of transfers was Rs 6710 crores

excess demand in the two tradable sectors is not of a high order. Therefore, the inflationary pressures on the economy critically depend on our ability to raise the rate of growth of output of the non tradable sectors, particularly Railway transport and Electricity. Deficit spending beyond 10 per cent generates excess demand in Agriculture because of which the foreign exchange requirement shoots up substantially. More important, the growth rates required to meet the excess demand in non-tradable sectors seem too high to be achieved.

The final question is what type of inference can we draw for the present day situation on the basis of the above results? In the period subsequent to our period of reference, the Union Government expenditure net of transfers has increased roughly 1.4 times in real terms. Any percentage increase at this higher level of government expenditure implies a much larger real deficit than we have postulated in our exercise. Similarly, the economy must have been better integrated in the intervening period and therefore sectoral multipliers (Our K_i in Section I) for a given composition of government expenditure will be higher which in turn means that the additional expenditure required (Our G_i^* in Section I) to reach the full capacity level in different sectors will be correspondingly lower than what we have estimated in our exercise. This should be viewed in the following context. Although the capacity of different sectors must have been raised in the intervening period, the level and the structure of excess capacity as worked out for four broad sectors viz. Basic Goods, Capital goods, Intermediate goods and Consumer goods have remained remarkably stable between 1971-80⁹. The composition of government expenditure, at least the part relating to commodity purchases, might have been changed. However, one does not expect drastic changes in the composition of government expenditure. To the extent the present pattern of sectoral demand conforms to the one implicit in this exercise, a much lower percentage of deficit spending than what we have indicated is likely to generate inflationary pressure.

- 1 The sectoral composition of the expenditure on commodity purchases has been generated by scrutinising and shifting the data scattered over a large number of sources like (i) Detailed Demands for Grants, (ii) Directory of Government Purchases, (iii) Supplement to the Report by the Railway Board on Indian Railway etc. But in the case of salary disbursements, there is no way of working out the commodity vector directly. This has been done indirectly by establishing a relationship between the salary distribution of the government employees and the consumer behaviour with the help of three parameter lognormal distribution. For further details see Atul Sarma and V.B. Tulasidhar, *Economic Impact of Government Expenditure*, Concept Publishing Co. New Delhi, 1984. Chapters 3 & 4.
- 2 The Fifth Plan Input matrix consists of 66 sectors. The coefficients are for 1973-74 at 1971-72 prices. The domestic coefficient matrix has been generated by deducting import coefficients matrix from the total coefficient matrix. These matrices are given in Annexure III of

the 'Technical Note' The domestic coefficient has been condensed to 20 sectors using the standard procedures of aggregation See, Government of India, *A Technical Note on the Approach to the Fifth Five Year Plan*, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1973

- 3 We used the Leontief inverse matrix of the form $(I-A-CV)^{-1}$ Where A is the domestic coefficient matrix, C is 20x2 matrix of marginal consumption coefficients and V is 2x20 matrix of value added coefficients For further details see V B Tulasidhar, *Impact Analysis of the Indian Union Government Expenditure in a Semi-Closed Input-Output Framework* Thesis submitted to the Gujarat University, 1983, Chapter III
- 4 Javshree Shah, *Inter-Industry Variations in Capacity Utilization in Indian Industries A Time Series Analysis 1960-73*, (unpublished Ph D thesis) Gujarat University, 1981, Chapter III
- 5 A Technical Note, *op at* Annexure III-1
- 6 See the *Report on Currency and Finance* (Vol II) 1976-77, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, pp 24 and 38
- 7 See Bakul H Dholakia, *Inter-Industry Linkages of Housing Investment in India, Working Paper No 301, Ahmedabad Indian Institute of Management*
- 8 The induced import requirements have been worked out using the estimates of induced import requirements per unit of government expenditure made by V B Tulasidhar, *op at* p 320 For the combined (commodity plus salary) expenditure, it works out at Rs 8.19 per Rs 100 of additional expenditure
- 9 The capacity utilization ratios (per cent) are

Sectors	1971-75	1980
Basic goods	77.4	77.2
Capital goods	60.2	62.4
Intermediate goods	79.7	82.5
Consumer goods	80.1	80.1

See I J Ahluwalia, *Industrial Growth in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985, p 109

CP JEEVAN*

The Rise and Fall of the Space Shuttle

JANUARY 28, 1986 proved to be the blackest day in the history of human adventure into outer space. On this tragic day, all the seven crew members perished in the 25th space shuttle mission (Mission 51-L) and the 10th flight of the space shuttle *Challenger*. This single accident left as many dead as the total dead in all the previous space travel accidents.

The explosion was indeed a disaster for the entire humanity. What adds to its tragic dimensions is that millions of children, watching on TV a school teacher Christa McAuliffe lift off into space, saw everything end up in a fireball. A unique experiment was in the offing in which the teacher in outer space was to give lessons to her students on the planet Earth. In retrospect her words, "If the teacher in space doesn't come back to teach, something is wrong", holds an irony that no one can ignore. Her words were meant to assure her students that the newly acquired space fame would not keep her away from her students.

Space ventures have always had an element of uncertainty and risk. However, humanity had taken pride in this endeavor and had come to believe that every foreseeable risk had been eliminated, every conceivable safety system incorporated and every possible accident scenario anticipated and eliminated. At least, that was the case till militarisation and commercialisation got the upper hand in space missions.

It is now left to the ashes of the shuttle crew to tell the tragic consequence of rapid militarisation and commercialisation of outer space. Hidden behind the triumphant story of shuttle flights, an all-time record of two dozen flights since 1981, is the not so widely known history of a space programme ridden with serious problems from its very outset. The manipulation by the powerful lobby of Aerospace industry and the US Space Administration ensured that those facts never got much attention in the mass media. But as one of the investigative reports put it, "the question was not whether a major disaster could befall the shuttle programme but of when."

The first launch of space shuttle—the Columbia mission of April 12, 1981—came after a series of delays, causing severe anxiety to the US Space Administration. However, the delay did not lead to an early reappraisal of the programme. This launch took place after the computer monitoring the launch stopped the launch several times.

Some facts are stranger than science fiction — once when the computer called a halt to the shuttle launch procedure, NASA tried to bypass the computer command. Fortunately, they were unsuccessful. The ship's oil had become contaminated and the oil filters, in two out of three auxiliary power units, had become clogged. This would have caused the jamming of the shuttle's hydraulic system that controls the landing gear. Malfunctioning of the landing gear would have led to a crash landing at a speed where nothing would be left to be salvaged.

What is indeed surprising is the haste with which the programme was made to proceed, although the first four flights, which were test flights, revealed that the shuttle performance, design and system components were far from satisfactory. Usually, manned launches are undertaken only after the system is perfected to the maximum possible extent and after sufficient test flights are carried out to evaluate performance.

The widely known facts of the test flights show that the shuttle's insulating tiles fell off with unfailing regularity during launches, and communication channels with ground stations repeatedly failed. TV cameras malfunctioned too often, even the life support system was badly flawed and many wondered whether the shuttle was a 'bankable' proposition. More serious, however, were the scores of problems with its rockets (the boosters in particular) and the fuel lines. The potential for a major mishap was not an unlikely event, but near certainty.

The principle hypothesis for the event relates to the defects in the booster. The Solid Rocket Boosters (SRB) consists of a pair of identically designed, 46 m tall and 4 meters wide rockets weighing 590,000 kg. They are made up of four main segments attached to each other by 177 steel pins.

On the fatal flight one of the segments was new, the others had flown previously. At the top of the boosters there is a nose containing the avionics and ignitor for the fuel, and at the other end, the rocket exhaust. On every shuttle mission, the two boosters supply about 3 million pounds of thrust, providing the power to propel the orbiter out of Earth's atmosphere. On this ill-fated 25th mission, the boosters and the *Challenger's* own liquid fuel engines were propelling into orbit the heaviest ever space cargo of all the shuttle missions. The *Challenger*, its fuel rockets and other equipment weighed 2 million kg (405 m pounds) at launching. NASA was reluctant to disclose what the net weight of payload is.

Shuttle's cryogenic liquid fuel rockets burn the highly volatile mix of liquid hydrogen and oxygen. The external fuel tank which holds this fuel is a kind of thermos flask containing 383,000 million gallons of liquid hydrogen at minus 217°C and 143,000 million gallons of liquid oxygen at minus 147°C. They are stored in separate compartments and is fed to the five shuttle rockets through 17 inch diameter aluminium and steel piping.

At launch, orbiter's main engines are ignited to yield more than a million pounds of thrust. The shuttle with its external liquid fuel tank and SRBs begin the lift off, rocking into a tight arc. Then as it steadies itself,

Challenger's computers send the critical command igniting the SRBs. Each of them provide 2.9 million pounds more of thrust. With this the combination of shuttle (orbiter), the SRBs and the external fuel tank breaks loose from the launch pad and propels itself into space bound trajectory.

35 seconds into the flight, with the SRBs providing maximum thrust, the *Challenger* undergoes severe aerodynamic stress. The orbiter's liquid fuel rockets are then automatically throttled down to 65 per cent thrust. Seventeen seconds later, *Challenger's* on board computers, then throttles the engines once again to provide 104 per cent thrust. At this stage, the SRBs would have burned nearly a million pounds of fuel.

On the computer screens at the mission control everything looked perfectly normal. "*Challenger*, go at throttled up" the mission control signalled and mission pilot Michael J Smith responded. "Roger, go at throttle up". Moments later a fireball engulfed the orbiter and the crew was lost in an enormous explosion.

If the mission had been successful, the solid fuel boosters would have burned for two minutes and 10 seconds before the shuttle commander jettisoned them. They would have plunged into the sea at 150 km per hour. The impact at this speed destroys the nose cap and the avionics, but the steel segments of the casing survive to be recovered and re-used.

This time, the mission control had to destroy the boosters because one of the boosters was going out of control and heading towards a thickly populated part of Florida. The self-destruct signal is common for both the boosters. Destruction of the boosters also destroyed with it the crucial physical evidence of what was wrong with them.

The time when the flames were emerging from the solid rocket booster and licking the liquid fuel tank coincides with the stage of the lift off when the tank was subject to the greatest aerodynamic stress. At this stage, the shuttle is propelling through the densest part of the atmosphere and the air passing between boosters and tank as well as between shuttle and tank, is at very high temperature due to friction heating. To help cope with this aero-dynamic and thermal stress, the pilot throttles the shuttle engines down to 65% of its full power. At the time of explosion, the shuttle commander was about to increase the thrust back to full power, after completing thrust reduction manoeuvre. This is done about 72 seconds after the ignition of solid rockets. Whereas the flames were seen escaping only 14 seconds before the explosion, the unusual black plume appears immediately after ignition.

The Explosion Sequence

The television pictures showed an orange glow at the base of the shuttle's fuel tank, which then spread. A second fainter glow was also seen behind the tank. The film taken from the opposite side and released a week after the accident revealed the glow as a jet of flame from the ruptured right hand booster. The glow finally spread towards the liquid hydrogen tank.

According to *New Scientist*, the flame glowing like a blow torch burns into

the hydrogen tank, releasing hydrogen fuel. Hydrogen burns only slowly in air. That slowness, perhaps, explains why it took 14 seconds from the rupture of the hydrogen tank to the explosion. It appears that within this time gap the flames would have burst the oxygen tank as well, producing intense heat as the hydrogen and oxygen mixed and combined explosively. From then on it would have taken only a fraction of a second for the fatal explosion.

If light weight sensors had been installed on the outside of the craft computers could have easily spotted the leak and aborted the flight. The shuttle commander could have then got the time to jettison both the tank and boosters and begin RTLS, the code for Return to Launch Site abort. Alternatively, the solid boosters could have been dumped, thus removing the source of flames before they reached the oxygen line. In 1984, three Soviet cosmonauts on board a Soyuz flight were saved by the protection system which allowed them to jump out of the exploding rocket.

The absence of sensors was not the only flaw that plagued the shuttle programme. The Presidential Commission investigating the tragedy examined NASA's chain of command amid charges that the Space Administration had wilfully sacrificed safety and ignored warnings not to go ahead with the launch. Already the Commission had learned that the rocket experts at Morton Thiokol, which makes the boosters, had, on the eve of the launch, unanimously opposed the launch only to be overruled by their own managers after NASA officials brought sufficient pressures to bear on them. NASA's managers interpreted the engineers' warning as only something of 'minor concern'.

Engineers reporting to the inquiry suspect the rubber rings inside the solid rocket boosters as the most likely cause of the accident. The committee has been told that technical experts were worried about the effect of cold weather such as the one prevailing on the morning of the flight, on the 'O' rings which ensure a perfect fit between the several panels that make up the walls of the booster.

The Morton-Thiokol experts had considered that the temperature of the solid fuel before launch should not drop below 4°C. Although there are no temperature gauges inside the fuel, NASA technicians had calculated the temperature of the booster fuel to be about 13°C. The air temperature at Cape Canaveral had, in fact, dropped to minus 2.2°C on the night before the launch.

There is also an opinion that the cold wind and chilly weather could have had very drastic effects on the booster. The scenario put forth is somewhat like this. The cold wind streams past one of the boosters directly facing the wind and gets slowed down. This stream of air then goes around the cold liquid fuel tanks holding the liquid hydrogen and oxygen, maintained at very low temperature, getting further cooled down in the process. This mass of air, cooled well below the air temperature, then goes past the second booster. This would, in turn, cause cooling of the second booster below the air temperature.

Though NASA has concluded that the inside temperature was well

above the danger level, the engineers at the Cape were worried because they had no precedent of a launch under such conditions. The officials from Morton Thiokol had informed NASA the situation was "outside our experience base," recalls William Lucas, director of the manned space flight centre at Houston. The lowest temperature during any previous launches had been two weeks earlier when it dipped to 10.5°C . However, after further discussion, the expert opinion was overruled and managers from Morton Thiokol gave consent for the launch.

Behind the errors of judgement were strong commercial pressures. One report indicated that Morton Thiokol's contract for manufacturing boosters for shuttle was being negotiated. With an order for another 180 boosters at stake, NASA was for the first time considering other companies for competitive bids. Allan McDonald, an engineer from Morton Thiokol had told the members of the Congress that he wanted to postpone the flight, which had already been put off three times. He says that when he suggested this, NASA's booster manager at the Kennedy Space Center, Lawrence Mulloy, replied: "My God, Thiokol when do you want me to launch? Next April?"

McDonald cited the three year history of problems with rubber seals (the 'O' rings). NASA was told on January 27 that the rubber would lose its resilience and the seals would not seat properly if the temperature went below freezing. NASA was well aware of the seating deficiency, having been reminded by Thiokol on 19 August 1985 that there was a "high probability" that a second back-up O-ring would not work if called upon. Such a failure would cause leakage of burning fuel from the booster.

It is clear that NASA was too keen to meet a tight launching schedule and rushed ahead despite warnings. During hearings before the US Senate, officials from NASA acknowledged that there had been a potentially serious breakdown in the chain of consultations that precede each launch. During the morning of the flight, technicians had noticed ice on the gantry and on parts of the shuttle. NASA was concerned that shattering ice can damage the delicate tiles on the shuttle during lift-off.

The members of the enquiry committee were in for another surprise when they were informed that engineers from Rockwell International had also warned the middle managers at NASA that they would not support a launch. They were concerned of the dangerous amounts of ice on the structure that supports the shuttle and its fuel tank. While icy conditions in itself was not unusual, the engineer could not predict what damage it might do when shaken loose during the shuttle's ascent. Rockwell, which makes the orbiters, was mainly concerned that shattering ice might break some of the delicate tiles that protect the orbiter from the heat of re-entry into Earth's atmosphere.

Rocco Petrone, an engineer with Rockwell, told NASA at about 09:00 hours on the morning of the launch that "Rockwell cannot assure that it is safe to fly." NASA had already heard from Robert Glaysher, another Rockwell engineer, that the team had too little experience with such cold conditions—the temperature was about 0°C at that time—to approve of a

launch. Glavisher said, "We felt it was unsafe to fly". This was the first time that Rockwell has taken an 'unsafe-to-fly' position." Arnold Aldrich, the top shuttle engineer at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, maintains that Rockwell did not "ask or insist" that NASA cancel the flight. He and other NASA managers, like the NASA officials at the booster division, considered this to be of "minor concern". Although ice accumulation has yet not any direct bearing on the accident, the testimony is similar to Morton Thiokol's story and reveals NASA's eagerness to go ahead with the launch, taking unprecedented risks.

A stream of documents now brought before the public show that the shuttle programme was badly flawed. On 23 occasions, the seals suffered varying amounts of erosion during flight. NASA and Morton Thiokol were working out ways to improve their design on the day the *Challenger* took off.

On December 17, 1982, a propulsion expert at NASA warned in an internal memorandum that the shuttle and the crew would be lost should the seal system fail. Without a perfect seal, the fuel, burning at 3204°C , would burn and possibly melt the steel casing. The boosters' O-rings originally fell in the category of parts labelled "criticality-1R", meaning that nothing stood between their failure and probable destruction of the shuttle, but that redundancy was built in. NASA documents reveal that on February 3, 1983, it reclassified the O-rings to simply "criticality-1", meaning that the back up system might not work.

Engineers had noted that during the first second of ignition, the inboard arm of the joint rotated away from the other arm of the joint as the pressure of the burning fuel mounted. At that time the primary O-ring extrudes into the enlarged gap and fills it. But it was felt that the arm may twist so much that the O-ring comes loose and will not seat. Should the primary ring then fail, there would be no back up.

The O-ring were also subject to erosion. On 6 of the 171 main case joints examined from boosters recovered from past flights, hot gases had eroded the primary O-rings. On at least two occasions, hot gases had got past the primary O-ring and deposited soot on the secondary O-ring. And once, on 29 April 1985, the secondary O-ring was eroded, possibly because it was unseated during a pre-launch pressure test. Overall, O-rings were damaged or eroded on 13 of the first 24 shuttle flights.

Series of reports from NASA's propulsion division mentioned O-ring problem. Modifications were devised and by August 1985, Morton Thiokol had come up with 43 possibilities. Implementation would have required several months or even years. Meanwhile, NASA continued to fly shuttles under intense pressure to meet its goal of 24 flights per year by 1992. According to *The New York Times* many NASA engineers held their breath when shuttles were being launched.

NASA pondered over the safety of the boosters when first building the craft in the 1970s. In 1978, the specialists hired by the agency to calculate probabilities of various accident scenarios, opined that danger of a serious accident was negligible. In December 1983, the US Airforce Weapons Laboratory decided to look again. Two of forthcoming shuttle payloads were to carry payloads with plutonium as power source and an explosion would spread radiation. The second analysis concluded that NASA had underestimated the risk factor by a factor of anything between 100 to 1000.

Congressman Edward Markey, who released the report, calculates that the real risk of a booster malfunctioning is 1 in 35 shuttle launches. That made an eventual accident "a virtual certainty", Markey said. Yet another serious allegation has come from a former NASA employee, Richard Cook. Cook's job was to calculate the cost of shuttle work each year. Cook wrote a memo to his superior, Michael Mann, on July 23, 1985 warning that the shuttle's safety was being "compromised".

Reducing Safety to Increase Payload

The solid fuel and oxidiser (to provide oxygen for burning) consist of a viscous mixture of aluminium powder, ammonium perchlorate, iron oxide and an epoxy binder. They are poured into the rocket casing and allowed to solidify. Right through the centre is a bore for the ignition to proceed and the hot gases to escape to the rocket exhausts. The steel casing is lined with insulating material (nitrile butadiene rubber) that is designed to withstand high temperatures. It undergoes slow charring during flight. The design is such that when the fuel is fully expended, half of the protective insulation should remain.

Strapping solid rockets to liquid fuel rockets is a very risky proposition. In 1983, on the 3rd *Challenger* flight, the rocket nozzle at the base of an SRB 'was within several seconds of a burn through', says David Winterholter, the acting chief of NASA's shuttle propulsion division in Washington (*News Week*). Despite the dangers involved, the same year, NASA decided to reduce the weight of the rockets and enhance payload capacity. This was done by reducing the thickness of the SRB's steel casing. NASA was able to effect an increase in shuttles' payload capacity by about 700 pounds. Other modifications were also made to speed up the burn rate and increase thrust. Thus, a thinner SRB also made a burn through the casing easier.

In its drive for increasing payload capacity, changes were also made in the design of the external fuel tank. These modifications made the tank and its assembly lighter. It was claimed that this did not result in reducing the tank assembly's capacity to withstand the severe aerodynamic stresses. Reductions were also made in the thickness of the aluminium alloy shell of the external tank. After the first five flights, a weight reduction of 10,000 pounds was effected by making substantial changes. The changes included altering and removal of structural stiffeners and stiffener rings as well as reduction of fuel tank thickness.

Faulty Liquid Fuel Engines

The main engines were also not free of troubles. During tests in 1970, several of them blew up. On the early shuttle missions, cracks had developed in the liquid hydrogen lines. The small, high speed turbo pumps, which generate 75,000 horse power and operating under high pressures at 35,000 revolutions per minute, were a source of constant trouble. Possibility of a broken blade from it hitting the fuel line or rupturing the tank was not unlikely. Only last year, NASA awarded a contract to the Aerojet Tech Systems Co., California to improve the turbo machinery.

Military compulsions and cost economics had come to outweigh the scientific significance of shuttle flights. While, on one hand, the shuttle programme had become the workhorse of the 'Star Wars' (SDI) programme, it had also got to be made commercially viable by increasing the number of flights per year. A re-usable heavy duty craft was primarily a military requirement. However, when decisions to opt for the shuttle programme were being made in the 1970s, the backdrop of Vietnam war made military considerations unpopular. While seeking funds for the programme, the US Congress was told that the shuttle would substantially reduce costs of space travel.

The scientific community, by and large, did not accord much credibility to such a claim. In fact, there was considerable opposition to the programme from top scientists. Even the director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Bruce Murray, argued that US science had no compelling reasons for opting for the immediate development of a reusable space vehicle. NASA promised that it can, with such a vehicle, put payloads into orbit at a cost as low as \$ 100 per pound of payload. With unmanned one use vehicles, the costs were around \$ 1000 per pound. However, the payload costs in the initial shuttle flights were around \$ 1100 per pound for a full payload, with the US Government heavily subsidising the flights. Subsidies had to be resorted to because the European Space Agency was offering deployment of payloads through unmanned *Ariane* launches at much less cost. The actual cost per pound of payload without state subsidies on shuttles works out to be an enormous \$ 4000. In order to make the shuttle cost effective, NASA had to chase a target of 30 flights per year on a budget of \$ 2 billion.

According to *Aviation Week*, 14 shuttle missions were planned for 1986, of which 5 were to be flown on *Challenger*. These payloads would now have to be traded off among *Columbia*, *Discovery* and *Atlantis*. 19 missions were planned for 1987, with six of them on *Challenger*. With the loss of *Challenger*, the programme would be drastically delayed and these delays would considerably push back the entire NASA programme.

Military programme has priority over the civilian programmes and the delays would prove to be fatal for the space research projects. Apart from the curtailment of shuttle flights due to loss of *Challenger*, the investigations into the disaster can lead to a reasonable reassessment of the programme causing drastic reduction in the frequency of launches. When this happens, given the

compulsions and strategic priorities of the Reagan administration, it is doubtful whether the space science projects would even get nominal importance in the re-structured programme

Over a period, space research has come to have only secondary significance in the Shuttle programme. The reasons, of course, were obvious from the very beginning: the 30 tonne payload capacity of the shuttle was not required for any of the space research projects, it was undoubtedly a military requirement. None of the research projects envisaged a 30 tonne payload capacity. However, even with a large military component, the shuttle flights were more than half empty.

Militarisation

Over the next two years, shuttles launched from Cape Kennedy were scheduled to carry advanced missile early warning satellites, electronic intelligence satellites and Defence Satellite Communication payloads. Shuttle missions from the United States Air Force (USAF) base at Vandenberg were to introduce an improved imaging, reconnaissance satellite and carry out polar orbit research for the Air Force.

Loss of Challenger has caused the US Department of Defence (DOD) to review its options for high priority Strategic Defence Initiative (the SDI or the Star Wars) payloads. A series of high level consultations have begun after the explosion. These meetings at the Strategic Defence Initiative Organisation (SDIO) have had the participation of Secretary of Defence, Caspar Weinberger and Lt Gen James A Abraham, the SDIO Director. These discussions centre around the launcher requirements of the SDIO. The shuttle is indispensable for the SDIO experiments in 1987 and in 1992 when the Star Wars programme enters its development stage.

The SDIO has purchased the last three available McDonnell Douglas Delta launches to augment the payload capacity available on the shuttles. First Delta launch is scheduled for August 1986. Increased use of space shuttles by the USAF was sanctioned early last year under the provisions of the National Security Launch Strategy approved by the President. Apart from the increased use of shuttles, the USAF also requires expendable launchers to put into orbit three high priority DOD space systems.

In a statement to a Senate Sub-Committee, Edward C Aldrige, Under Secretary, USAF, has said that these three consist of Defence Support Programme Satellite (DSPS), Milstar hardened communications satellite and a classified system that he was not authorised to disclose. The USAF requirements of the shuttle flights was estimated at 9-12 payloads per year starting with the 1990s, *excluding* the needs of the SDI. This was revealed by the USAF Director of Space Systems and Command, Control and Communications, Brigadier General Donald J Kutyna at the hearings before the House Science & Technology Committee (*Aviation Week*, July '85).

Also in existence is an exclusive USAF shuttle programme based at Vandenberg Air Force base. Located on Southern California near Lompoc, the

Air Force spent \$ 2.9 billion preparing the launch site for shuttle missions. The first exclusive USAF launch was set up for mid July 1986 and is likely to be upset by the accident. The space shuttle *Discovery* was viewed as a dedicated Vandenberg AFB orbiter.

Undaunted by the explosion, the USAF is continuing with its launch site and systems test schedule at Vandenberg in support of the planned launch of *Discovery*. "We still have no official change in our launch schedule, and we're continuing to work towards a July 15 launch date", reports *Aviation Week* quoting USAF officials. According to these officials "until we hear otherwise, we'll continue our preparations (at Vandenberg)".

Hypergolic and cryogenic propellant system tests and an exhaust duct problem have already contributed to delays and snags in the schedule at Vandenberg. Even without the delay caused by the loss of *Challenger*, the USAF is faced with a stiff schedule to meet the mid July first flight date, and the second Vandenberg launch planned for December 1986.

The Air Force needs the high lift capacity of the shuttle and the Titan 34-D class expendable launchers to meet its heavy lift requirements. The recent explosion of a Titan rocket launched by the Air Force underscores the frantic pace at which DOD work is being done. The Titan rocket that exploded is, in fact, the alternative military payload booster for geo-synchronous orbit missions from late 1988.

The shuttle is to be used in November 1987 to put into orbit 10 NAVSTAR Global Positioning Satellite. In fact, three such satellites were on *Challenger* as part of mixed payloads. A major military mission on board the shuttle this year was to test Teal Ruby, an important component of Star Wars scheme. Teal Ruby is an infrared tracking system designed to look down towards Earth and locate aircraft. The shuttle was also to test other sensors. Later experiments were expected to carry lasers and telescopes to test their ability to track targets in and above the atmosphere.

Scientific Setbacks

For NASA, the year was to be "the Year of Science". Satellites were to probe polar regions of the Sun, study an asteroid and carry out observations on Jupiter. A US space based experiment called 'Astro' to observe comet Halley was also planned in early March. There was also the planned deployment in October 1986 of the much awaited Hubble Space Telescope. All these were to be carried on board *Columbia* and *Challenger*. All these scientific missions now face postponement.

Another work that is to suffer greatly is the work on building a space station. Two NASA missions planned for the year—Ulysses and Galileo, were to have been carried into space on board the shuttle. They were to be launched within a few days of each other, in mid May during a brief "launch window". The launch window is determined by the position of Jupiter. These conditions will not come around again until July 1987.

Ulysses, a joint mission of NASA and the European Space Agency,

would have explored the poles of the Sun and nearby interstellar space. Both Ulysses and Galileo were to have been sent deep into space by a modified Centaur rocket attached to the scientific payloads and launched from the shuttle's cargo bay. The solar orbit of Ulysses was to have been achieved by using the gravitational field of Jupiter as a 'sling-shot'.

On the way to Jupiter, Galileo would have given scientists a close view of the asteroid-Amphitrite. Galileo is designed to orbit Jupiter for two years and to parachute scientific instruments into the planet's mysterious atmosphere.

Biggest scientific casualty could be the Edwin P. Hubble Space Telescope, one of the most elaborate scientific instruments ever to be designed. The project has already been delayed several times. The telescope costs more than \$ 1.2 billion, and can probe far deeper into space than has ever been possible.

Commercial Setbacks

Commercialisation of the shuttle flights have also suffered setbacks that may not be possible to be reversed. According to Brad Meslin, the Executive Vice President at the Center for Space Policy, in Boston, space ventures requiring immediate financing may go "down the tubes", since the catastrophe is expected to have a chilling effect on space finance. Projects that would be delayed include a material processing experiment belonging to Boeing, Grumman and Rockwell and a polymer experiment planned by the 3M and General Motors.

The underwriters have had record losses, about \$ 600 million, on space risks over the past two years. Underwriting of insurance policies covering shuttle flights would be frozen for several months, said Brian Stockwell, President of Corroon & Black Insurance, a leading broker in the US (*New Scientist*). If the shuttle programme remains grounded for about a year, many satellite owners would switch over to the European Space Agency's Ariane rocket for deployment. However, the Ariane programme is also not without difficulties and is running 6 months behind schedule, since the failure of Ariane V15 in September 1985.

NASA had plans to launch 6 communication satellites in 1986 and 8 in 1987. Many of these, including two of the Ministry of Defence, UK would also be delayed. Other satellites facing delays belong to India, Indonesia, Intelsat, GTE, Western Union, Hughes, American Satellite Business Systems and the RCA.

Explosion of a Myth

The myth that was sought to be foisted on the American psyche that space weapons and the SDI (the Star Wars programme) would make USA safe has been badly exploded with the shuttle tragedy. If the teacher in space has not come back to teach, the reasons for what went wrong are not far to seek. She was simply the victim of a dangerously misconceived strategic programme. The fire ball in Florida sky proved that there cannot be even a fool proof

space launch let alone a super sophisticated fail proof and invulnerable space weapons system. If the mission control computers could not sense the fate of the shuttle crew when orange flames were licking the liquid hydrogen fuel tanks, can SDI save the American crew of the space ship Earth when the American ICBMs start on their doomsday trajectories to 'win' a nuclear war? The lesson from the Florida sky was, if anything the explosion of the Star Wars myth. While paying tributes to the seven heroes of *Challenger*, let us hope that the lesson is not lost on anyone.

Language As Ideology

VEENA DAS (ed) *THE WORD AND THE WORLD* Fantasy, Symbol and Record, Sage Publications, 1986, pp 218

LANGUAGE, or as the authors of this book put it, the word, has a complex role to play in the science of man. Engels, in his seminal work, *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, written in 1876 and first published in 1896, has this to say "Mastery over nature began with the development of the hand, with labour, and widened man's horizon at every new advance. He was continually discovering new, hitherto unknown, properties in natural objects. On the other hand, the development of labour necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by increasing cases of mutual support and joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. First labour, after it and then with it speech—these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of man."¹ This highlights two aspects of language *its developmental grasp over reality and its use as ideology*. Any stress on the one without the other will lead to partial or faulty conclusions, as we shall see.

The traditional anthropological approach, from which the editors of this volume and many of the contributors are unable to escape, ignores the importance of a *historical perspective* in sifting out elements of a growing developmental grasp from merely ideologically, giving new solutions for problems faced by society. This is evident, when the introduction to this volume states "This volume lies at the intersection of life and the word, recognising the transient quality of both and acknowledging the inherent plurality through which words are made and re-made."²

This also is an important class perspective, for, "almost the whole (of) ideology amounts either to a distorted interpretation of this history or to a complete abstraction from it. Ideology is itself only one of the aspects of this history."³ Thus, the shifts and distortions that take place, the contradictory ideologies that coexist and the over-arching solutions that are imposed on society reflect class struggle and the interests of the ruling classes parading as the ruling ideology, whose limitations, distortions from reality and transformations are necessarily ephemeral. To acknowledge that as "words are made and remade" existentially is essentially to deny the historical perspective that alone shows how ephemeral they are and points to more durable perspectives, where historically, the rule of the exploiting classes has broken down in

many countries of the world with the establishment of socialist society, giving even ideological production a new role free from the distortions necessitated by exploitative societies that preceded it

What then are the insights that Western-oriented anthropology offers us? Being ahistorical, the conclusions are necessarily partial. But still, it is interesting to see which avenues of research are developed and which are ignored. Let us start with Pocock's *Art and Theology in the Bhagavata Purana*.

First, in the creation of a mythology, time the irreversible and constantly moving on, must be done away with. In other words, an *ahistorical perspective* is called for, a perspective that is achieved by "an elaborate mathematics which, through its speciously precise conversion tables, presents the ancestors; gods, Brahman and finally the Supreme Being as existing in incalculable and increasingly greater units of time. Human time, therefore, although proceeding at a rate faster than the divine time (s) is not qualitatively different. However, it is less real than divine time and we have seen how the conversion of one into the other underlines the relative realities."⁴ And this relativism, too, is negated through the doctrine of rebirth (*samsara*), which dissolves various sequential identities into one, so that each appears to be no more than a mask of a reality belonging to a sequence of time other than that of the perceived world. Then, "at the end of 1000 *catur yuga*, one day of Brahman for a *Kalpa* elapses. Then the flames from the mouth of Shesha destroy all the worlds and Brahman sleeps on Shesha for another *Kalpa* until the work of creation is renewed."⁵ At the same time, while the progression of time is from good to evil, *in general*, the Bhagavata overcomes this contradiction by allowing individual release from the coils of *Kalpyuga* through *bhakti*, not so rare a ploy, as all religions place faith above perception and the logical conclusions derived from it.

What is striking here is the closeness of this ahistorical ideological perspective of early medieval Hindu thought to that of our anthropologists, whereas the Hindu theologians see the destruction of old worlds and creation of new ones through the concept of *pralaya*, our anthropologists see worlds made and remade after periods of social breakdown that Durkheim called *anomie*. And we shall see later what purpose this serves.

We see also in Pocock's analysis how this timelessness allows the fusion and radical alteration of realities. These are assured by metaphoric inclusion of *twin personalities* like Krishna-Balarama, and then, by a series of metonymic introductions to Krishna-Rama, and finally, Krishna-Arjuna, with Balarama having lost his superior status and becoming secondary to Krishna.⁶ Moreover, in some ways Pocock fits the facts into the schema, for Arjuna, after Krishna's death, becomes the protector of the Yadus who survive, and appoints Parikshit, his great-grandson to rule over them, in a sense, redressing the balance between Balarama and Krishna. But all this still does not answer the question why these gods have to be integrated in this fashion. Pocock sees this exercise purely as a philosophic one. "what is destroyed in

the microcosm or the macrocosm is an illusion, only the self-knowing *atman* truly exists, free of cycle or sequence."⁹ This still fails to explain why such a long-winded exercise is needed to incorporate the Yadu-hero Krishna into the pantheon at a level higher even than Rama, who becomes Arjuna at the tail end of the *Purana*.

D. D. Kosambi, over twenty years ago, in 1964, dealt with this question quite differently when he explained the *puranas* as the basis of primitive class and state formation among people who had previously been independent, egalitarian tribes legitimised by a priestly class, very often at the cost of independent Kṣatriya republics. Krishna's genesis is seen in the same perspective, he notes how "a great deal of doctrine later palmed off in Krishna's name was surreptitiously borrowed from Buddhism, as for that matter were some epithets (*Bhagavata*, *Narottama*, *Purushottama*). Where the Buddha was an historical figure, it is difficult to find anything historical about any of the numerous Krishnas whose myths and legends coalesced to form the dark all-god. The whole Krishna saga is a magnificent example of what a true believer can manage to swallow, a perfect setting of opportunism for the specious arguments of the *Gita*. It reflects the relationship between a highly complex society with a relatively primitive level of production and its religion."¹⁰

What, fundamentally, was the social role of Buddhism now borrowed by the Krishna cult? It developed out of a crumbling society. "The Buddha accepted the new social requirement in which debtors and slaves could not run away from their obligations, animals could no longer be killed indiscriminately, and private property could not be appropriated. Ability to pay taxes was considered by the Buddha as one of the five fruits of wealth. And at the same time he offered to the oppressed peoples of his times a suitable illusion of ancient tribal communism which was already trampled and undermined in reality. In fact, the Buddha had to act as an unconscious tool of history, and it was not possible for him, though he understood the problem fully well, to change the course of historical transformation and re-establish the pre-class society once again. Class Society, in spite of all its ugliness was a historical necessity, and what the Buddha could do under such a condition was to boost up some of its progressive features in public life and to rescue some of the beneficial aspects of tribal life in a class society."¹¹

In fact, this is precisely what the Krishna legend does, and his multiple affairs with the *gopis* and encounters with tribal mother-goddesses are loved by the general public as it offers them an illusion of the easy interpersonal relations obtaining in egalitarian societies. But this is only one aspect of the question. The other aspect is that through the association with this egalitarian ideal, an individual relation of submission is built-up, which is described by Kakar in his paper, *Erotic Fantasy: the Secret Passion of Radha and Krishna*, as follows: "Krishna's erotic homage to Radha conveys something of the aching quality of man's fantasy of surrender at the height of sexual excitement."¹² But there is more than mere fantasy to it, for we are told "In the *bhakti* cults, where the worshipper must create an erotic relationship with

Krishna, the transcendence of the boundaries of gender becomes imperative for the male devotee, who endeavours to behave like a woman in relation to the Lord."¹² The fundamental thing here is that in the transition from one form of exploitative society to another, or in the case of social "safety-valves," the concept of *liberation through submission* takes the place of *liberation through struggle*, the genuinely revolutionary solution. But this aspect of the Gita Govinda and the Krishna cult remains unexplored on account of the perspective of the author, as well as the diversionary role of Krishna cults today when social discontent has perfectly valid revolutionary channels of expression available to it.

It still remains to be explained why Buddhism, very much a social revolt, does not survive, and the Krishna cult takes its place. The answer ultimately lies in the limits of the productive processes at work behind these myths and ideologies. Their basis was the development of an early stage of the caste system with food production upto 700 B.C. "under which the fruits of labour could be expropriated without slavery," and later, this expanded southward, "backed by the highly developed northern society with its advanced techniques, in particular, *a recently acquired knowledge of metals*. The new territory was far more varied and not to be settled in the same way as the northern. Hence the further development and new function of caste, where the Brahmin would write *puranas* to make aboriginal rites respectable, while the savage chiefs of the tribe would turn into Kings and nobles ruling over the tribe. This was really the formation of new classes under external stimulus, whereas the older northern caste system had first developed as a class-structure from within the tribe."¹³ The first of these stages corresponds to the supremacy of the plough-bearing Balarama, the second to the iron-bearing and death-dealing inventions of the northern states brought in by brahmanical advisors, after the victory of the kingdoms Kasi and Kosala over the tribal republics.

Thus, while Buddhism reflected the autonomous transformation of tribal society into states and classes, the later process as the *puranic* inflations indicate, merely developed a method of coexisting with primitive socio-economic formations in the narrow self-interest of brahmanical priests and the tribal aristocracies they sought to liberate from the mass of tribesmen, without necessarily advancing the productive forces as had happened in the initial stages in the North. For this, the supernatural figure of Krishna, with his pragmatic capacity to integrate the tribal mother-goddess cults, was a far better choice than the arid philosopher who preached non-violence and austerity. And so, Krishna took on the mantle of the Buddha, and the critical spirit of the Buddha was replaced by submission to the deity.

The position of Kasi too, is to be seen in this perspective. Eck, in her paper on *Banaras: Cosmos and Paradise in the Hindu Imagination*, analyses the *Kasi Khanda*, which she sees as "a narrative context in which Kashi is 'constructed' in the imagination, through one story after another."¹⁴ playing with the spatial dimension just as in the *Bhagavata Purana* the temporal aspect

is utilised. But, essentially, the effort is the same — to come to terms with unpleasant class realities by recreating an illusion of primeval egalitarianism. In the Kāśī myth too, the space of Kāśī is presented not as what it is, but as “*Anandavana* or *Ananda Kanana* — the Forest of Bliss. While investigating Kāśī in the Hindu imagination, we must recognise the fact that, to a great extent, it is not mentally fashioned as a city at all, but as a forest. In it, “there is no *kama*, no instinctive passion — no *Krodha*, natural enmity,”¹⁵ so there is no question of rebirth so necessary to maintain the inequalitarian caste society that had emerged. Kāśī thus became the living symbol of the egalitarian illusion.

And yet, behind this benign illusion, even Eck notes, “there is one clear and visible indicator of Kāśī’s transcendent quality, however, and that is the role of death in the life of the city.”¹⁶ Though from an ahistorical perspective, Eck sees only ‘*mokṣa*’ or liberation from the cycle of transmigration, Kosambi points to a far deeper connexion that Kāśī had with the death of egalitarian, symbiotic tribal society. Kosambi, for example, notes a cave drawing of 800 B.C. in Mirzapur district, showing “a charioteer attacking the aborigines (who drew the picture) with a discus. The charioteers would be Aryans exploring the region across the river for iron ore” around “the time when the first settlement at Banaras was founded.”¹⁷ Thus, the connection of Kāśī with iron-mining and with iron as the death-dealing metal (Krishna too is killed with an iron-tipped arrow) was probably its first reason for pre-eminence. However, Kāśī was soon to be conquered by Kosala, and once its real pre-eminence was gone, a mythical character had to be created for it. Why this survived to become so central to Hinduism can only be explained historically and not structurally.

The history of the process shows it was of extremely limited value to the development of productive forces. Kosambi notes how, for Hindu culture, “The melting-pot was the Delhi-Meerut-Mathura area, at a time when metals, especially iron, were known but in short supply. Late Vedic Aryans, Naga food-gatherers of the forested divide, and Krishna’s neovedic cattle-herders could together form a more efficient food producing society if only they stopped fighting each other. The environment and shortage of metals made it impossible for anyone of the three to subdue the others by naked force. So the myths had to coalesce. Recombination of the human elements was helped by the Kāśyapās, the editing of legends was done by another Brahmin class, the Bhṛiguś. The mutual acculturation was so effective that the *Mahābhārata* continued to be inflated and the *Purāṇas* rewritten on the same model throughout the medieval period. The process failed only when grouping people together on the basis of joint superstition could no longer help to create a more productive society. This failure was made patent by the relative ease of the Muslim conquest.”¹⁸ Thus, where the anthropologist, from the perspective of the ideologist, sees a successful literary effort, the historian notes the bleak conditions that gave it primacy, and how, ultimately, it failed to build an enduring reality around itself as it was never meant to anyway — but became merely a mechanism of a narrow class of Brahmins to earn a parasitic living as second-

class citizens in a state ruled by a foreign elite

This is brought home even more clearly in Anuradha Kapur's paper on *Actors, Pilgrims, Kings and Gods: The Ram Lila at Ram Nagar*, largely because the author has touched on certain historical realities that highlight the non-deterministic role played by the ideologist, except on the existential and ephemeral level, first in a colonial state and then in a 'secular' Republic, both of whom patronized local ritual as they failed to eradicate the semi-feudal relations that still characterise rural India

The Ramnagar *Ramlila*, it is said, began in 1825, but its formalisation as a ritual took place in the period of 1835-1889, when Ishwari Prashad Narain Singh was Maharaja, that is, after the integration of the principality into the colonial state in 1875. Thus, the *Ramlila* emerges at a period when the developmental role of the Banaras ruling house as well as its political independence have both been extinguished

What then is the function of this ideology? Kapur correctly notes "the Maharaja's identity receives support from the spectacle of the *Ramlila* for being a King is at no time spotlighted, displayed, pointed towards, as it is done during the month of the performance"¹⁹ And as is usual in myth, the task is accomplished through multiplying metaphors where the king stands as the symbol of the ruling deity of the city, Shiva. As the regent of Shiva, the performance begins only if he or one of his family members is present, only he and his guest view it astride an elephant, and he interrupts the performance for prayers and so on

Then his metaphorical equivalence with Rama is stressed when it is his worship of arms (the iron) that takes the centre-stage and he leads the procession of the audience to Lanka. But metaphor is not enough, for we see that when it comes to the killing of Ravana, he is absent, "as one King should not witness the death of another"²⁰ Thus we see that in myth and ritual mere relational identity is not enough. A metonymic transformation is required, where a part of one scheme of things is physically introduced into the other, giving an illusion of a real transformation, resulting in a new relation entering the minds of people

This is enacted in the Maharaja's palace, when out of the context of the *Ramacharitamanasa*, the Maharaja fetes the gods in his palace. "Within one evening, the Maharaja pays tribute to the gods like all the devotees in Ramnagar would like to but cannot since they are not royalty, he sanctifies his own home by having the *swarupas* (symbols of deity) enter it, he achieves contemporaneity with the gods by stepping directly into their *lila*, and he completes his duties as a patron by rewarding his performers. Over and above that he reclaims his ground as Maharaja. During the previous 30 days Ramnagar town has been Rama's home and space - on the peripheries of which the Maharaja remained. Today we move from Tulsi's and Rama's territory into that of the Maharaja's not only figuratively but actually"²¹ Thus the purpose of the enactment is to legitimise the Maharaja's role in a manner in which, for obvious reasons, a colonial power could not

Kapur, however, introduces another aspect in her paper, which is not developed as it should be. She notes "When the Maharaja's privileges as the ruler of Banaras were abolished in 1949, the Government of India agreed to pay him Rs 10,000 for the Ramlila and for the maintenance of the temple connected with it. This amount was later increased to Rs 115,000."²² It is understandable that a despotic or colonial power should need to prop up its henchmen by such ideological means, but it is inexplicable in an independent state that forced the colonial masters to retreat before the onslaught of the national movement should do so, unless of course, its manner of acquiring independence from its enemy left much to be desired—that is, the failure to complete the agrarian revolution to acquire the genuine support of the masses for the Indian state. Failing that any legitimacy, be it of the *Puranas* or the Ramnagar Ramlila would have to do. The weakness of the anthropological approach is that while it can explore the purely *ideological function* of the word, it is blind to the process and analysis of the survival and collapse of ideologies which can only develop on the basis of a historical understanding. Only Kapur's paper touches on this marginally in this volume, otherwise, it is generally lacking, leading to a very superficial understanding of the word.

However, there are certain insights, which the anthropological method does bring into relief. In Roma Chatterji's paper *The Voyage of the Hero: the Self and the other of one Narrative tradition of Purulia*, one cannot help but question the reduction of 'travel' narrative stories set in caste society to a simplistic 'self-other' pattern, and the editor also notes "that in the stories the other is not modelled after one single image."²³ At a more general level, there is a concept of the self transformed through struggle, and "the struggle is manifested in different ways depending on the initial impetus responsible for the voyage,"²⁴ in which stages of life are represented, showing the superficiality of the analytical categories used by the author.

It is significant, however, as Chatterji notes "In these stories, the society is initially in a state of conflict in which even if there are reflexive selves they are in a hostile relationship with those around them. Instead of communication and cooperation, there is only misunderstanding and deception. From this state the stories describe the movement through the voyage—a liminal process—by which the social group is formed, self-consciousness and meaning established, though very painfully at times."²⁵ Obviously the stories deal with social contradictions which they highlight and try to resolve, a process which can only be analysed in the concrete historical conditions they emerge and flourish in and not structurally only.

A detailed analysis of all such contradictions is not possible, but there is one theme that recurs in a number of articles and which has a broader significance, which is worth analysing. The importance of marriage as a quest (very often representing the fruit of victory in a contest) contrasts sharply with the attitude to women, who are either represented as witches or are sacrificed in the tales. This is a feature common to both the Purulia stories and that of Puraṇ Bhagat,²⁶ where Luna, the evil step-mother and Sundari, the sacrificed woman are both present. It is interesting that both these sets of stories are

popular among peasant communities where obviously the economic importance of the farm labour of women conflicts sharply with their low status in Hindu society, giving birth to an ambivalence towards wives who are either projected as evil spirits or innocent sacrifices. This attitude clearly shows that peasant society cannot accept the Hindu ideal of the servile and submissive wife and the conflict between that idealisation and the economic reality gave birth to a body of literature that was fundamentally against women, representing them either as 'evil' or part and parcel of a "sacrificial resolution"²⁷ of this contradiction. In other words, *violence alone is the basis of the degradation of women in Hindu society*, but the theme is neither picked up nor elaborated by the authors of this volume in spite of their avowed interest in "existential" problems.

But a related aspect is noted by Gill that "unlike the Oedipus myth, where the son kills the father and marries his mother, the disequilibrium in the Puran legend is just the opposite. It is the mother who seduces the son, and it is the father who kills his progeny. In this mother-son relation, what is challenged is the authority and, consequently, the masculinity of the father."²⁸ The "mother" here, as we have seen above, is an ambivalent figure, here ambivalence being represented as two persons, a good real mother and a bad step-mother, but the father, as in the case of Dasratha, is exonerated of his guilt for the "sacrifice" of his son, a sacrifice Yayati exacts in far more crude terms. This reflects the enormous need, in a strongly male dominated society to ideologically buttress the gerontocratic principle, as killings between fathers and sons were common among the ruling classes, both Hindu and Muslim, but unacceptable to the peasantry, hence the ambivalence expressed in the stories. Gill describes it as follows: "It is the older generation, the generation of authority and power, the generation that gives birth but wants to withhold the generative process of growth, that fails. When an element of the old structure wants to pull back the new, sprouting youth, it refuses to oblige. The brutal rejection sows the seeds of extreme frustration and destruction amongst the old. The transformational, creative process that emerges in the legend of Puran is progressive and does not take a single step in regression."²⁹

Also, the legend of Puran Bhagat analysed here is a nineteenth century version and could well be compared with earlier versions, as well as with the story of Yayati who took over his son's youth, to show how the gerontocratic principle had suffered a decline over the years. However, the exclusive reliance on existential or psychological analysis fails to explain why the Oedipus myth prevailed in ancient Greece and that of Yayati in ancient India, and why, a radically altered version of it developed in nineteenth-century Punjab. Why was Sophocles regressive and Shahryar progressive—and for that matter, where does Sartre's *Antigone* stand in relation to the two? Also, what is the connection between the 'sacrificial resolution' of Puran Bhagat's love for Sundaran as opposed to the new pattern of romances like *Mirza Saheban*, *Sohni Mahiwal* and *Heer Ranjha* which gained far more popularity in the same period? The psycholinguistic approach leaves too many ques-

tions unanswered to be considered a rigorous one and the conclusions it often comes to are trite and tautologous. The major weakness of this type of analysis is that it sees literary creations as explanations of themselves in themselves and not in relation to the realities that give birth to them or sustain them over the years. That is why, Urvashi Misri, while explaining the ambiguity, and consequently ritual, attached to children, fails to explain why "integration based on sameness" of the tradition has to be balanced with "uniqueness of the individual" today except in bare structural terms as a "contradiction."³⁰ In fact, the whole historical development of the individual with the development of capitalist relations of production and their penetration into pre-capitalist societies passes without notice.

In his article on *the Colonial administration and its ordering of knowledge to aid its rule*, Richard Saumarez Smith notes how the British created a situation, where "on the one hand, land mass of India is partitioned into discrete units, every square inch of which is mappable and has owners and occupants subject to legal controls, on the other hand, the social mass of India partitioned similarly into discrete named social groups, each subject to its own rules and customs, which knowable become governable."³¹ However, there is more to knowledge than Smith gives credit for. Facts were ordered by imperialism in a particular fashion to suit its rule. The meaning of *ownership* was quite different under imperial rule from the pre-British period as the numerous experiments with land-tenure reflect. Secondly, the ossification of Indian society into *discrete castes, each with its own rules and customs* (and very often new status given to it by the British as in the case of the category of 'personal law' or 'marital races'), served the process of 'divide and rule' in a manner the old organic caste village never did. However, he ignores the fact that behind this lay the military failure of imperialism in the revolt of 1857 and political problems created by the disaffection of the intelligentsia, necessitating a 'scientific' ideology to buttress British rule.

But, Smith notes how this resulted in a situation where "instead of a federation of thousands of 'little republics,' each with its own terms of engagement and its own constitution, society became fragmented into countless statuses in knowledge and in law."³² Thus 'personal law' became the innovation through which imperialism institutionalised and codified rules of interpersonal behaviour, arbitrarily at one point in time, to divide the people in a manner in which they were never divided before. Also, individual officers had considerable latitude in granting rights of ownership and status, which they did not hesitate to turn to their own pecuniary advantage.³³ Moreover, the whole system was based on violence, both of imperialist armies and those of its henchmen, the landlords. The law and records came in only to justify it. They could only buttress the violence and not replace it. The fact that this linguistic approach obscures this reality reflects its poverty and its failure to come to terms with irreversible change and the ongoing developments of society, both progressive and revolutionary. Nor can it explain why, of an unprecedented battery of records and legislation, imperialist rule came to an end just when it had declared for itself a millennial life after the construction of New Delhi in

1911 as its custom-built repository of records and legislative activity

This failure to understand and analyse the developmental aspect of society, which ultimately determines which cultural structures survive or transform and which are destroyed, is reflected most sharply in the article on *Violence, Victimhood, and the language of Silence* by Veena Das and Ashis Nandy. Their approach, while it can explain socially contained forms of violence like sacrifice and feuding, is unable to explain revolutionary violence as it limits itself only to one context of discourse. And that is because of their own definition, where both counter-revolutionary and revolutionary violence figure as *anomie*, or just social breakdown, obviously favouring counter-revolution by equating it with revolution. The continuum is seen as "the movement from violence, as generative of society and culture, to the loss of signification in periods of *anomie* when violence cannot be contained within any structure of ideas. Thus the movement here is from the understanding of order to *anomie*. The language by which order is created and communicated is easier to comprehend. Loss of signification cannot find a language within which it could be represented."³⁴

Yet, they do appreciate the limitations of this approach, for they can vaguely comprehend the existence of "a *hidden* knowledge to find expression at some later date."³⁵ This knowledge is hidden from them only because of their narrow perspective. From another standpoint, "New art never begins with new forms: new art is born with new man."³⁶ Here, it is the "*changing relations between man and the world*" through history that are significant.³⁷ These relations have been studied by Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels and their broad parameters outlined as follows: "The first stage is that of the 'initial integrity' of man, which corresponds to the pre-capitalist formations. At this stage man has still not worked out his relations with the world in full measure or become detached from the material and spiritual environment he has created for himself. The second is that of bourgeois social relations and the capitalist division of labour, which tends to lead to the complete bankruptcy of the individual and general alienation of his creative powers. Finally, communism, which is 'the real *appropriation* of the *human* essence by and the complete return of man to himself as a social (human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development."³⁸ There is nothing *hidden* in the historical method. Only it requires a more rigorous approach and analysis.

From this perspective, "thousands of 'nerves' and 'blood vessels' join art to the social organism as a whole. In one way or another, literally everything exerts influence on the condition of art and its tendencies to develop: the social system, its class structure, economy, politics, ideology, changing social attitudes, the goals which a nation sets itself at a given moment or even their absence, a nation's level of education and culture, the stormy or relatively calm atmosphere of social life, the general situation in the world."³⁹ while "structurologists make life easier for themselves by analysing these texts in isolation without regard for the external world reflected and imprinted in them."⁴⁰ The Marxist approach does not reduce the progress of man over

time and the role of ideology in it to mere 'ephemeral penings which obscure the inevitable development of society to communism

The authors of this book on the other hand, by overtransforming reality, achieve a method of white wash that keeps decaying traditions alive beyond their time as role of revolutionary struggle in creating new stances. This approach is not only static, but it also is a process of stasis and decay, while at the same time diverting us from a progressive creative effort and an understanding of human history so essential for intellectuals in any period of history. This approach can never help us comprehend the world. The limitations were so clearly spelt out by Engels a 110 :

Democratic

- 1 Engels, FE *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*
- 2 Das, Veena Introduction to *The Word and the World* Far Eastern Publications (1986) p 1
- 3 Marx, Karl and Engels, FE *The German Ideology* (1968) p 28
- 4 Pocock, DF *Art and Theology in the Bhagavata Purana* in *The Word and the World* p 35
- 5 Pocock, D F, *op cit* p 36
- 6 Pocock, D F, *op cit*, p 31
- 7 Archer, WG *The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry* p 39
- 8 Pocock, D F, *op cit*, p 39
- 9 Kosambi, D D *The Culture and civilisation of Ancient India* (1971) p 129
- 10 Bhattacharya, N N *The Indian Mother Goddess* (1971) p 129
- 11 Kakar, Sudhir *Erotic Fantasy The Secret Passion of Radha and Krishna* Das p 93
- 12 *ibid* p 90
- 13 Kosambi, D D *op cit* p 51
- 14 Eck, Diana L *Banaras Cosmos and Paradise in the Hindu Imagination* p. 48
- 15 *ibid*, p 51
- 16 *ibid* p 54
- 17 Kosambi, D D *op cit* p 115
- 18 Kosambi, D D *op cit* p 95
- 19 Kapur, Anuradha *Actors, Pilgrims, Kings and Gods The Ramula at Ramnagar* Das p 68

- 20 Kapur, *op cit* p 69
- 21 Kapur, *op cit* p 70
- 22 Kapur, *op cit* p 61
- 23 Das, Veena *Epilogue* in *op cit* p 199
- 24 Chatterjee, Roma *The Self and the Other in One Narrative Tradition of Purulia* in *op cit* p 111
- 25 Chatterjee, Roma *ibid* 110
- 26 Gill HS *The human condition in Puran Bhagat* an essay in existential anthropology of a Punjabi legend in *op cit* p 133
- 27 Chatterjee, Roma *op cit* p 109
- 28 Gill, HS *op cit* p 151
- 29 Gill, HS *op cit* p 152
- 30 Misra, Urvashi, *Child and Childhood a conceptual construction* in *op cit* p 131
- 31 Smith, Richard Saumarez *Rule-by-Records and Rule-by-Reports complementary aspects of the British Imperial rule of law* in *op cit* p 156 (italics ours)
- 32 Smith, Richard Saumarez *op cit*, p 163
- 33 Smith, Richard Saumarez *op cit* p 162 fn 26
- 34 Das Veena and Nandy Ashis *Violence, Victimhood and the Language of Silence* in *op cit* p 194
- 35 *ibid*
- 36 The German poet Johannes R Becher quoted in Kuzmenko, Yuri *Soviet Literature-Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1983) p 10
- 37 Kuzmenko, Yuri *op cit* p 12
- 38 Kuzmenko, Yuri *op cit* p 15
- 39 Kuzmenko, Yuri *op cit* p 8
- 40 *ibid*

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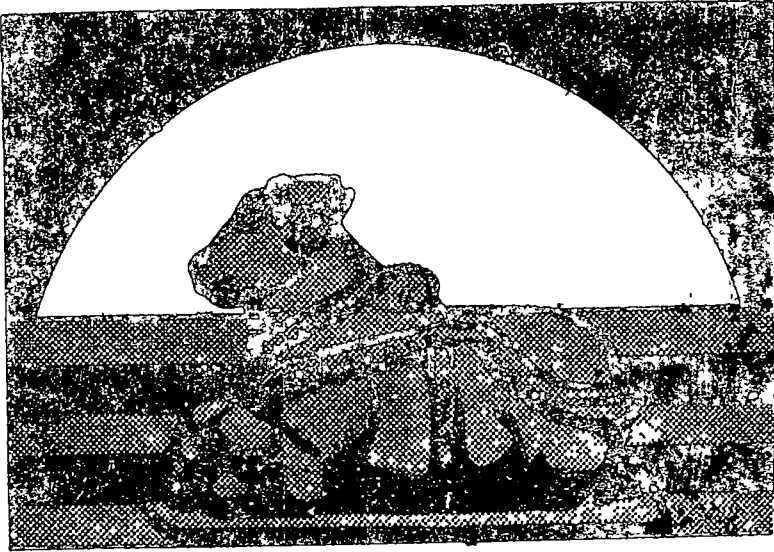
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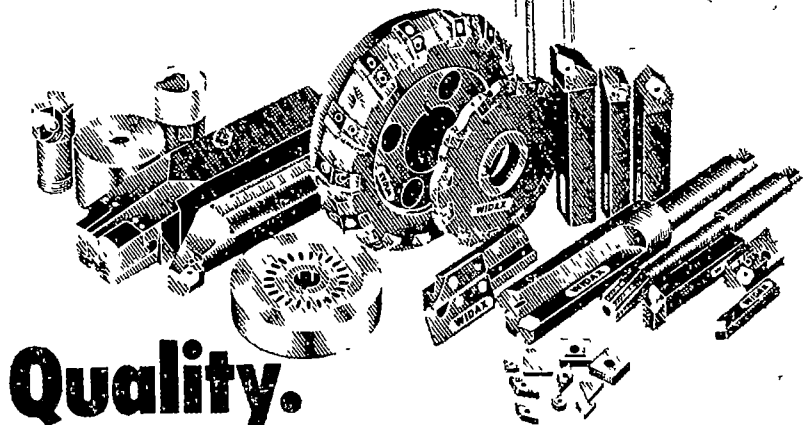
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Editorial Note

THE ARGUMENT that pre-capitalist land relations impose a fetter upon capitalist development in the country has been advanced by many. Where they differ from one another is with regard to their differing perceptions of how this fetter actually operates, these in turn spring from differing perceptions of the precise nature of the pre-capitalist relations, the precise transmutations that have occurred in these relations on account of the pursuit of the capitalist path of development, and the precise contours of the macro-economic dynamics of Indian capitalism. Pradhan Harishankar Prasad's lead article in the current number of *Social Scientist* is of interest because he clearly takes a particular position on all these questions: characterising the agrarian relations in large tracts of the country as semi-feudal, he holds that the land-owners have no interest in developing the productive forces in agriculture, and instead deploy much of their surplus, as well as such public funds as they can grab, for maintaining *inter alia* private armies of hired goons, in addition to the repressive organs of the state which at the local level work hand-in-glove with them. Such agricultural growth as has occurred in the country in recent years has been confined to areas where semi-feudal relations were weak or absent, which accounts for the regional divergence in agricultural performance. Clearly however the scope for continued growth of this kind is limited, and the way out of the regime of stagnation and terror lies in the implementation of wide-ranging land reforms. While this position in the specificity is arguable, and in any case needs a good deal of further substantiation, it is worth taking note of by students of contemporary Indian society.

The historical genesis in the colonial period of the agrarian relations which emerged in two different regions of the country is discussed in the other two articles, one dealing with parts of what constituted the Madras Presidency and the other dealing with tribal Maharashtra. The precise differences between the British and the pre-British revenue systems, the essentially pecuniary considerations that motivated the British adoption of different revenue settlements at different time-periods, the divergence between the actual outcomes of the settlements and the theoretical prognostications that were used to justify their introduction, are all quite

familiar territory to students of Indian economic history, though this territory does abound in disputes as well. The article discussing the ryotwari settlement in Madras Presidency is of interest not because its conclusions are startlingly new but because it makes use of a substantial amount of source material to support its conclusions thus giving them a surer foundation. The other article which compares the experiences of the Bhils and the Worli tribesmen in Maharashtra, begins by locating each group within its specific geographical environment, investigates the impact of British subjugation in each case, and emphasises the different routes via which the two groups come to share, each in its own specific form, the common fate of degradation that engulfs them in the new system.

The notes in this number deal with divergent themes. Gautam Navlakha examines the speeches made by ruling party members during the recent parliamentary debate on the Muslim Women's Bill, and detects a clear trace of a "Hindus-are-superior" view in some of these speeches; a subtle appeal is thus made to one type of communalism even while appeasing the fundamentalists and communal elements of another type. This, he argues, constitutes an important element of the new ruling class strategy that has been evolving: a subtle but deliberate promotion of communal consciousness as a means of political "management". G.V. Ramana argues that an important reason why inflation has been comparatively modest despite huge budget deficits in recent years, has been quite apart from the succession of good harvests, a diversion of speculative activity away from the commodity markets to the stock markets; this diversion has been stimulated by the new measures of economic "liberalisation" introduced in the eighties. The fact that such diversions to and fro do occur in the Indian economy with significant consequences for price behaviour is a noteworthy feature of its functioning.

PRADHAN H. PRASAD*

Institutional Reforms and Agricultural Growth

GROWTH and development are so much associated with the institutional set-up that any analysis of growth in isolation from 'relations of production' is an exercise in futility. Changes in production are not only dependent on technological changes but are also related to the mode of appropriation and use of economic surplus. Technological progress is also considerably influenced by the motivation which a particular set of 'relations of production' provide for investment. The incentive for investment in technology, *ceteris paribus*, is greater in a system where the class which appropriates the economic surplus pays the direct producers a fixed quantum than in a system which provides sharing of gross produce in a certain fixed proportion. In a system where on account of risk and small scale of production, the quantum of surplus which is appropriated is fixed, there is hardly any motive for those who appropriate surplus value, to invest in technological progress.

Before the advent of the British, agriculture was the most important activity and source of livelihood for people in India. The mode of appropriation of economic surplus from the direct producers in agriculture was mainly through land revenue and land rent, petty customary exactions (which varied in nature and content from place to place) and to some extent through usury¹. Though these obligations on the direct producers had the force of tradition, use of force by the hierarchy of landlords, ranging from autonomous chieftains to petty intermediaries, was not infrequent.² "Thus, there emerged not only a variety of land rights but also a kind of a pyramidal structure in agrarian relations wherein rights of various kinds were superimposed upon each other. The burden of the shares of the different categories of zamindars and also of the imperial revenue demand ultimately fell on the cultivator and placed such a strain on the agrarian economy that much progress was hardly possible."³ The surplus which was appropriated was mainly used to raise military strength for power and prestige, to settle disputes and to control direct producers which was necessary in a situation where 'might was right'. There were conflicts of interests between the lords themselves, between

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lords and over-lords and between different types of lords and the state. Therefore, hardly any surplus was left for expanded reproduction. This can be termed as feudal production relations. The village artisans were self employed and catered to the local needs. The Indian handicrafts which by the eighteenth century had attained world wide acclaim, prospered around the feudal courts and seats of power and were patronised by the ruling classes. Here, either the craftsmen worked under a master craftsman or there was widespread use of the 'putting-out' system of production.

British policy was essentially aimed at the destruction of Indian handicrafts so as to secure a market for the industrial output of Britain and extraction of surplus value for military expenses in India and industrial investment at home. Therefore, colonial policy allowed the agrarian structure to remain almost the same except that the private armies (except in native states) were abolished. The land rights were enforced by a bourgeois legal system. A bourgeois superstructure was imposed on feudal 'production relations'. Therefore, in the rural areas the mode of appropriation of surplus during colonial rule period was through feudal land revenue, land rent and petty feudal exactions and an increasing scale of usury. As usury, which arose out of chronic poverty, became an important method of exercising control over the direct producers (in view of the absence of private armies), the rural oligarchy had developed a vested interest in keeping the direct producers in abject poverty and, therefore, remained inimical to overall development. The essential approach was not to maximise return on land but to maximise hold on direct producers.⁴ Not that force was not used or that musclemen were not employed to control the direct producers, but these were used in collusion with and with the support of the functionaries of the British administration, the police, the judiciary and the executive. The autonomy of the rural rich in this context was somewhat reduced, but eventually they collaborated with imperialism. There was another aspect of feudal 'production relations' which was different from West European feudalism. Even during the pre-colonial days tenancy rights, by and large, were hereditary and implied limited occupancy rights. Because of this and the British policy of de-industrialisation and thwarting capitalist development outside agriculture which increased pressure on land, proletarianisation in the Marxist sense of the term, also did not take place.

The pre-British trend in expansion of commodity production got a boost because of colonial policy. Its concern was opening of the Indian market for British manufacture in exchange for primary products. In order to increase surplus appropriation, it tilted the terms of trade heavily against primary products, specially agriculture. This led to widespread pauperism among direct producers in agriculture and robbed this sector of any significant private investment and strengthened the feudal institutions. That is why some of us term it as 'semi-feudal production relations'. Even

in the post-independence era, even after the abolition of the land revenue collection rights of the intermediaries in the fifties of this century (in the name of land reforms), there has hardly been any fundamental change in the 'production relations' in the rural belt of India and the rural oligarchy of the semi-feudal set-up remains inimical to rapid overall development.⁵ These reforms were initiated in the mid-fifties and were completed by the end of the decade. This gave the rural oligarchy a temporary set-back. But by the early seventies it consolidated its position. It is evident that in India the two important modes of appropriation of surplus even to-day are Marxian ground rent and usury. Indian agriculture is still predominantly pre capitalist. By capitalist mode of production we understand, at the risk of being accused of oversimplification, a situation characterised by "commodity production" and "free labour". Marx very clearly elaborated this when he said "that two very different kinds of commodity-possessors must come face to face and into contact ; on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by buying other people's labour-power, on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their own labour-power, and therefore the sellers of labour. Free labourers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, nor do the means of production belong to them, as in the case of peasant-proprietors, they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With this polarisation of the market for commodities, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are given. The capitalist system pre-supposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realise their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production, a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage labourers."⁶ It is evident from this that in a capitalist mode of production, in its purest form, the surplus value is appropriated from direct producers through the labour process alone. The rent, interest and profits which exist therein, are the modes of sharing of surplus and not of appropriation of surplus from the direct producers. However, this purest form of capitalist mode of production does not conform to the actual conditions even in the most advanced capitalist countries. Time never completely erases all the past institutions. Some institutions linger on for a considerable period of time. Therefore, while characterising any 'mode of production' or 'social formation', one has to look at the dominant features of the production relations and its historical

process of evolution.

It is evident from Tables I and II that tenancy is an institution which continues to be important and widespread. Tenancy and usury are still important modes of appropriation of surplus value. Landlords, employers and village money lenders are the major sources which even now advance loans to the direct producers (Table II column V).

Table II column II provides evidence that except in Haryana and Punjab, more than two-fifth of agricultural labour households reported possessing land. There is evidence pointing to a significant use of attached farm workers (Table II column VI). The agricultural labourers are 'not free' in either sense of the term. Column III of Table II provides evidence that surplus appropriation through the labour process is yet to emerge as a dominant aspect in agricultural production. Indian agriculture thus provides ample evidence of pre-capitalist production relations. There is, of course, some evidence of significant levels of commodity production (Table I column V). In the case of cereals and food-grains 'non-commodity production' still accounts for half, if not more.⁷ Even if commodity production would have been more pronounced, this alone would not be sufficient for capitalist mode of production. Even feudal mode of production can have fairly developed commodity production. "The outstanding case where the connection does not hold is the recrudescence of feudalism in Eastern Europe at the end of the fifteenth century—that "second serfdom" of which Friedrich Engels wrote—a revival of the old system which was associated with the growth of production for the market. Alike in the Baltic States, in Poland and Bohemia expanding opportunities for grain export led, not to the abolition, but the augmentation or revival of servile obligations on the peasantry, and to arable cultivation for the market on the large estates on a basis of serf labour. Similarly in Hungary the growth of trade, the growth of large estate-farming and increased impositions on the peasants went hand in hand."⁸ Therefore it would not be out of place to maintain that the institutional set-up in Indian agriculture still remains dominated by semi-feudal production relations, with terms of trade still remaining heavily against agriculture⁹ and the dominant rural oligarchy remains inimical to rapid overall development of agriculture.

II

In spite of colonial policy aimed at promoting industrialisation in home country at the cost of the colonies, the British had to undertake rail and road construction and a limited degree of industrialisation in India. Jute manufacturing, engineering industry and banking etc developed in eastern India. But since the British also had a firm control over mercantile trade in eastern India, industrial development there was not an independent one. On the other hand, a strong mercantile trade survived in spite of the British,

movement reached its climax when the Indian National Congress gave the 'Quit India' slogan in 1942. The hegemony of the movement was in the hands of west Indian bourgeoisie who by then had acquired the characteristic of big bourgeoisie, and mobilised the support of all classes in rural India, except zamindars, talukdars, inamdars and rulers of the native states

A coalition of big bourgeoisie and traditional rural oligarchy enmeshed in linguistic ethos, ethnicity and cultural identities, emerged as ruling classes after 1947. While the former strove for a strong unitary state, the latter pressed for regional autonomy. The federal structure and subsequent reorganisation of states in India was the outcome of the pressure exerted by numerous traditional feudal identities and heritage. Since the dominant economic issue during the period of freedom movement was the abject poverty of the masses related to non-development, the Indian state, dominated by big bourgeoisie, planned for capitalist development under its patronage. By the mid-fifties the strategy of development was firmly laid down in terms of accumulation and technology. The process of development that got initiated in India brought forth evidence suggesting that India was moving towards a 'self-reliant' growth path which was not in conformity with the imperialist design for development of the Third World countries.

The Indian model of the First Five Year Plan emphasised mainly on investment and accumulation. Since, immediately after independence, India found itself having quite sizeable sterling balances, it did not worry much about the inflow of funds from abroad and manufacture of capital-goods within the country. But the Indian bourgeoisie was encountering difficulties because of the virtual non-existence of a capital goods industrial sector in India. It found that import of technology and capital goods could be done only on the terms of imperialism even when foreign exchange was hardly a problem. Therefore, by the mid-fifties the planning scenario changed. The industrial policy resolution of 1956 and the two sector model of the Second Five Year Plan laid great emphasis on 'heavy and capital goods' industries. The West advised strongly against this approach. When India approached western countries for its steel project, the U.S.A., the U.K. and France declined one after the other. India, however, went ahead with the help of Soviet collaboration. The foundation for a 'self-reliant' growth path was firmly laid. By the late fifties Middle East policy was reoriented with an eye on the development of South-South trade. These evoked further hostility from imperialism. The international agencies (like World Bank, IMF, UNDP etc.) created conditions leading to drastic reduction of funds resulting in devaluation and, thereafter, three years of 'plan holiday' in

rate sector in 1976, while the top twenty accounted for 21 per cent¹¹ There is evidence that their monopoly power has increased in the post independence era Table III shows their growth since 1964.

The percentages of sales of top 20 and top 45 industrial groups in 1976 to net domestic product of manufacturing sector were 61.7 and 87.45 respectively. Bardhan¹² gives the list of the top 20 industrial groups as per sales in 1981. If one examines the list, one finds that Ashok Leyland and Reliance Textiles did not find a place either among the top 45 industrial houses in 1972 (reply to a Rajya Sabha question) or in Goyal's list.¹³ There were others, e.g. Kirloskar, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj, TVS, Larsen and Toubro and Scindia who also could not have been included in the top 20 on the sales criterion in 1972. These 8 industrial groups which figured among the top 20 in 1981 on the sales criterion registered the highest average growth rate per year of 46.29 percent during the ten year period of 1972 to 1981, while top 20 industrial groups as a whole registered a growth rate of only 31.31 percent, Tatas and Birlas 28.31 percent, net domestic product in private organised sector 18.63 percent and the manufacturing sector as a whole registered a growth rate of 19.75 percent per year. The sale of the top 20 in 1981 amounted to 87 and 67 percent respectively of the net domestic product in private organised sector and manufacturing as a whole.

This not only implies the growing importance of big bourgeoisie in the economy, but that the lower group of big industrial bourgeoisie have registered a very high rate of growth. It is this group which went in a big way for foreign collaboration and is more dependent on imperialism¹⁴ Though big bourgeoisie interests were completely opposed to imperialism in the context of its own exclusive domination over the Indian market, it remained dependent (more so for technology) on the imperialist set. As we have seen, some gradually became more dependent than the others, so, there was a clash of interests within the big bourgeoisie itself.

Because of low growth of Indian agriculture (mainly due to semi-feudal relations of production), industry was facing a demand constraint for its products. But it had sufficient monopoly power not to allow terms of trade going against it. The terms of trade had continued to move in its favour (against agriculture) till 1964. But this trend could not be sustained longer in view of the rate of growth of agriculture remaining below industry's requirements and the existence of limited outlets for industrial exports (see Table III). The terms of trade began to move against industry. This contradiction was resolved by big bourgeoisie's attempt to limit the growth of industrial output at the middle level, associated with decline in capacity

utilization,¹⁵ and promoting agricultural growth in selected pockets. The big bourgeoisie was not powerful enough to go ahead with land reforms so as to remove the stranglehold of feudal rural oligarchy. Therefore, it planned for intensive agricultural growth in selected pockets where the semi-feudal relations were weak and irrigation infrastructure facilities were available. The Community Development programme was replaced by Intensive Area Development programme. By mid-sixties the thrust of the agricultural development policy was in terms of High Yielding Varieties of seeds and fertilizers. Consequently some parts of India showed a much higher rate of growth than others, thereby increasing regional inequality. By 1980-81, industry thus achieved terms of trade (against agriculture) which were even more favourable than what had obtained in 1950-51. The big bourgeoisie was, thus, able to resolve the contradiction for the time being. But in this process, the uneven agricultural development brought forth regional tensions and also contradiction between big and middle level bourgeoisie got deepened.

Thus, there have emerged contradictions within the bourgeoisie.¹⁶ The big bourgeoisie attempted to limit the growth of middle and small ones and on the other hand, the lower upper and even smaller ones, attempted to increase collaboration with the imperialist set at an expanding scale to get a better foot-hold in the relatively inelastic Indian market. In this conflict the big bourgeoisie uses the bureaucratic apparatus which has been our colonial legacy. Over time an elaborate and complex bureaucratic network has emerged encompassing price controls, rationing and control of inputs, capital, transport and credit, regulations regarding areas of operations, licencing procedures, MRTP and FERA regulations, controls on trade and foreign exchange which, without much affecting the big bourgeoisie, retarded the growth of industrial sector in general and small sector in particular.¹⁷ On the other hand, pressure was mounted by imperialism and the section of bourgeoisie which was deeply involved with it, leading to liberalisation in operation of FERA companies, special facilities for investment to non-resident Indians or persons of Indian origin and import liberalisation.¹⁸ This increasing collaboration resulted in an increasing drain of resources abroad. Lau's estimate for visible net outflow which is given in Table IV, provides some evidence for this. But still more is lost to the economy through invisible methods like transfer pricing etc.¹⁹ This drain of resources creates an additional drag on both private and public sector investment which in turn operates as an additional drag on the expansion of home market and thus slows down industrial growth. This, coupled with excessive bureaucratic control, and the use of imported high-cost technology and other industrial inputs (owing to transfer pricing) is responsible for the high cost industrial structure of the economy. The economic crisis further deepened because of big bourgeoisie's attempt to woo the rural oligarchy by offering conces-

sions in the shape of tax free income and huge subsidies on irrigation water, power, diesel, fertilizers and credit ²⁰ Ahluwalia lists "four factors which contributed to industrial stagnation. These were (a) slow growth of agricultural incomes and their effect in limiting the demand for industrial goods, (b) the slowdown in public investment after the mid-sixties with its particular impact on infrastructural investment, (c) poor management of the constraints, and (d) the industrial policy framework, including both domestic industrial policies and trade policies and their effect in creating a high cost industrial structure in the economy" ²¹.

III

The transfer of power also allowed the continuance of a bureaucratic structure which was the creation of imperialism. The bureaucratic structure was so archaic that it had developed an in-built capacity to thwart any quick change. The Indian bureaucracy, traditionally drawn mostly from the rural upper and middle classes, had remained wedded to feudal traditions and values and even to-day remains completely divorced from the bourgeois work culture. The bulk of the government sector functionaries even to-day will claim with relish their ancestry (only a few generations ago) to landed gentry. Those drawn from the urban upper and middle classes with no landed interest are in hopeless minority in the all India context. In most of the states, they are serving the ruling political elite imbued with the feudal ethos, and therefore, they remain wedded to feudal values. Moreover, the bureaucracy has had a tradition of looking down upon indigenous enterprises. It finds them far inferior to their western counterpart. Moreover, foreign merchants and industrial companies still offer lucrative assignments to the bureaucrats (after retirement) and to their wayward children. Therefore, the bureaucracy still favours imperialist linkages. This is reinforced by the links which have developed increasingly between the bureaucracy and international agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF.

IV

The post Second World War era found world imperialism in a dilemma. It was not sure how long-lasting will be the phase of recovery in view of its losing direct political control over the colonies, and the emergence of a socialist bloc which implied a shrinking of market for imperialist nations. Therefore, unless the poor nations develop at a faster rate the market for the industrial goods produced by the imperialist set would be facing a demand crisis. That is why the IMF and a host of international organisations became concerned with the development of newly freed countries under the patronage of world imperialism. In this

context world imperialism came into conflict with archaic production relations and the rural oligarchy in such nations as were developing under its patronage such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. These nations could not have achieved rapid growth in the absence of the most radical land reform measures (outside the socialist bloc in the post Second World War period) which completely destroyed the traditional agrarian structure. In South Korea strict provisions were enacted and implemented to prevent the re-emergence of disequalising tendency with a low ceiling of three hectares per family, and thereby the stranglehold of the traditional rural oligarchy was destroyed.²² Imperialism, therefore, was busy promoting in the developing economies a path of growth where the nations would remain subservient to imperialism, where there is growth of compradore bourgeoisie and the state remains under imperialist control. Examples of nations following such growth path are to-day South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, etc. These countries import a variety of capital goods and technology from the imperialist set. Then they use their own cheap labour and the commodities so fabricated are exported by the transnationals, who control and channel the bulk of the world trade of the developing and the developed nations. Nations engaged in export-oriented growth of this kind belong to the 'dependence' paradigm as against India's growth path, where the inflow of capital remains low and internalisation of technology gets a higher premium than what obtains in the countries in 'dependence' paradigm, resulting in rather low growth of income and employment. But the contradiction between the Indian big bourgeoisie and imperialism which continued, was the reason why imperialism lost its enthusiasm for radical land reforms in India by the sixties. This was also echoed in writings within India. For example, the study by Dandekar and Rath rejects the radical land reform possibility maintaining that "the very low ceilings, which any sizable programme of redistribution of land will require, cannot be justified on sound economic considerations or rational calculation."²³ They further add that "it is futile to try to resolve the problem of rural poverty, in an overpopulated land, by redistribution of land which is in short supply."²⁴ They, however failed to realise that radical land reforms were needed for destroying the stranglehold of the traditional rural oligarchy. What was probably forgotten in this context is that the rapid growth of both South Korea and Japan could not have been achieved in the absence of land reforms. The land reform measures taken by them remain the most radical outside the socialist bloc and completely destroyed the traditional agrarian structure. The only success stories of poverty eradication and overall rural development are found in the countries namely Korea, Japan and China which have carried out radical land reforms.

Therefore, the big bourgeoisie, because of its limitations, and imperialism, because of its design, put the land reforms issue completely

in to the background by the early seventies. "The major thrust of American-inspired Indian policy in the field of agriculture was 'technology first'. Land reforms, which had been already stalled by the resistance of landlords and big farmers, were practically shelved in the 1960s".²⁵ The big bourgeoisie went ahead with the New Technology (what is also popularly known as the Green Revolution), a combination of irrigation, HYV seeds and fertilisers for agricultural growth. The following Table shows that agriculture growth during the period 1957-58 to 1963-64 which is associated with limited land reforms of mid-fifties, is higher than in the 1963-64 to 1971-72 period involving the New Technology. The last column of the Table also suggests that because the land reform was of a very limited nature, the technology based growth could not be sustained except in a very narrow strip where semi-feudal production relations were weak or where some success was achieved in land reforms such as in West Bengal and Kerala,²⁶ or where there was notable expansion of irrigation as in parts of Rajasthan. The effects of the New Technology have been most in evidence in the north-west region²⁷ notably in Haryana, Punjab and western U.P. "Thus, the so-called green revolution which is associated with the second period, while it has indeed dramatically improved yields in particular crops (e.g. wheat) in particular regions (e.g. the north-west), has not led to any acceleration in the overall rate of growth in agriculture. Put another way, the yield growth of recent years has barely managed to compensate for the area expansion of earlier years in overall contribution to growth. There has actually been a significant deceleration in the growth of production of commercial crops (oil seeds, fibres, etc.) in the second period, and within foodgrains the production of pulses, a major source of protein for the poor, has been largely stagnant"²⁸

Imperialism, however, pressed forth the argument that technological growth and capital formation development strategy in India had a tendency to bypass the relatively poorer people. That is why international organisations like World Bank, and Asian Development Banks etc began to follow aggressively the McNamara strategy of high consumption oriented and concessional loans programmes for target groups, namely child care, mid-day meal, rural health, slum clearance, schemes for non-viable industrial technology (for example the intermediate technology), support for projects for marginal farmers and landless rural workers etc. The attempt was to further increase the stranglehold of bureaucratic and semi-feudal structures on the Indian economy and to dilute the resources needed for accumulation and technology. The Indian bureaucracy was a willing ally for such programmes.

The whole poverty question in the manner in which it is being debated to-day is the outcome of this process. But the analysis of the data suggests that the agricultural growth and increase in foodgrain pro-

duction leads to a decline in proportion of poor in rural areas and Trickle Down Modified (TDM) thesis is valid also in the Indian context²⁹ Ahluwalia's analysis also shows that "at the all-India level there is a strong support for the hypothesis that the incidence of rural poverty is inversely related to agricultural performance"³⁰ His findings also suggest that in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh "agricultural growth offsets the adverse impact of other factors so that if only agriculture can grow fast enough, it is likely to reduce the incidence of poverty".³¹

V

The above analysis provides ample evidence of a contradiction between 'legitimacy and growth' in India because even after more than 35 years of independence and effort for rapid development, two-fifth of rural population remains in abject poverty. There is evidence to suggest that poverty alleviation is positively dependent on growth, particularly, agricultural growth. But the low rate of agricultural growth, which has caused low overall development in the country is responsible for low rate of eradication of poverty in this country. The single most important factor responsible for low and uneven growth of agriculture is the existence of 'semi-feudal' production relations' in rural India. In such a set-up, the flow of funds into rural areas in the name of planning and development for rural electrification, irrigation work, land conservation schemes, afforestation, road construction and other infrastructural support, are mostly usurped by rural oligarchy in collusion with the state functionaries and the bureaucracy. This is widespread and is more pronounced in such areas where 'semi-feudal' agrarian relations are strong and the bureaucracy, enmeshed in feudal traditions, works hand-in-glove with the rural rich. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Eastern UP are some of the notable examples where such a situation continues. In such places, a section of rural rich has emerged which takes contracts for almost all works of the government, and also works, controlled and sponsored by public sector. This section shamelessly and with impunity usurps the large bulk of public funds in this process. It also acts as brokers and agents for different interests and charges a heavy fee for itself³² The bulk of the flow of credit and funds for target oriented schemes for rural poor are siphoned off by this section, the new rural rich. There is any amount of evidence to suggest that the programmes of poverty alleviation have miserably failed³³ and the reasons assigned for the failure are inadequate funding, faulty formulation of schemes and more often their poor implementation by the existing bureaucratic set-up. What is forgotten in this context is that the bureaucracy, as an institution, is serving faithfully and loyally its master, that is the rural oligarchy.

Thus, the large bulk of public sector funds, meant for 'expanded production' in rural areas, are appropriated by the rural oligarchy and is put to non-development use (not even in personal savings). That is why even when the gains of limited agricultural growth have been shared mainly by the rural rich,³⁴ the marginal propensity to save in rural belt has remained low and constant³⁵

The rural oligarchy (including the new rural rich) uses these funds for its petty luxuries and to strengthen the control over the direct producers. The grip of the rural oligarchy over the polity has begun to be threatened under the impact of rising middle peasantry and increased consciousness of the poor peasants in mid-sixties. Thereafter we find emergence of private armed militia in rural areas (a reminder of pre-British days) which further strengthens the semi-feudal institutions. The violence on the direct producers has increased. In some rural belts even the bureaucracy dare not oppose the open violence perpetuated by the rural oligarchy. That is why since mid-sixties, there is increasing evidence of atrocities on the direct producers and counter violence.

Thus, in the present situation of feudal ethos, and deepening of economic crisis in terms of low and uneven growth, rapidly increasing unemployment, contradictions between middle peasantry and rural oligarchy and also between middle and big bourgeoisie, a weak working class movement, and imperialist machinations, traditional identities surface forcefully. This gets mixed up with legitimate demands, greater regional autonomy against centralised economic policy, and sometimes creates situations which appear as secessionist movements on communal and ethnic lines. The big bourgeoisie uses this opportunity to strengthen the forces for centralisation and curtailment of regional autonomy.

Therefore, the case for land reforms was never as strong as now. Land reforms are needed to break the power of the rural oligarchy. The land reform in terms of Gandhijee's slogan of 'land to the tillers' is the one that is needed. This is the first institutional reform that is required for transforming agrarian structure for a sustained growth in agriculture and overall development of the economy. Other institutional reforms can follow and not precede this basic crucial institutional reform.

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Table I

	Lowest 10 percent of the cultivating household	Percentage of household leasing-in land	Percentage of homegrown consumption to total con- sumption of food-grains	
	Percen- tage leas- ing-in land	Percen- tage indebted		
(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)	(V)
Andhra Pradesh	8.40	73.64	29.95	36.17 ¹
Assam	14.34	37.96	49.17	63.99
Bihar	29.22	69.72	33.48	47.69
Gujarat	1.44	61.71	13.74	46.86
Haryana	37.03	70.51	29.41	52.47
Karnataka	10.58	72.71	27.68	43.99
Kerala	24.47	67.21	17.67	21.41
Madhya Pradesh	22.25	59.67	23.26	63.02
Maharashtra	7.29	57.82	14.69	39.05
Orissa	12.21	56.83	29.28	54.31
Punjab	35.25	66.75	27.52	46.89
Rajasthan	15.57	73.33	14.81	60.48
Tamilnadu	13.51	70.80	31.16	30.31
Uttar Pradesh	22.07	61.05	24.96	57.94
West Bengal	10.95	48.13	30.63	53.38
All India	16.75	63.00	N.A	N.A

Source : National Sample Survey, Twenty Fifth Round (1970-71) for columns II and III, Twenty Sixth Round (1971-72) for column IV and Nineteenth Round (1964-55) for column V.

Percentage of

	Percentage of				
	Agricul- tural labour house- holds with land.	Self-emplo- yed among the direct producers	Agricul- tural labour house- holds report- ing in- debted- ness.	Loans taken by Agricul- tural labour households from emplo- yer money lender	Cultivating households reporting attached farm work- ers
(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)	(V)	(VI)
Andhra Pradesh	41.17	44.55	66.09	44.09	11.57
Assam	46.66	73.03	11.75	20.97	81.89
Bihar	60.03	55.47	52.80	65.58	21.63
Gujarat	40.18	61.59	41.98	26.48	11.21
Haryana	7.54	74.96	66.86	45.04	8.86
Karnataka	45.62	51.77	52.25	30.56	17.90
Kerala	87.50	51.26	80.76	19.79	2.93
Madhya Pradesh	49.67	67.82	38.86	45.06	16.74
Maharashtra	42.40	N A	43.12	15.07	13.66
Orissa	53.43	53.23	40.67	43.95	25.59
Punjab	7.03	64.89	60.87	48.16	21.74
Rajasthan	60.55	86.54	60.53	57.30	2.69
Tamil Nadu	36.35	43.51	66.90	47.84	10.84
Uttar Pradesh	45.24	76.43	47.63	66.96	20.64
West Bengal	60.86	49.66	50.23	36.88	20.80

Source : National Sample Survey Thirty Second Round (1977-78) for columns 2 to 5 and Twenty Sixth Round (1971-72) for column 6.

Table III

		Percentage average growth rate per annum 1963-64 to 1975-76	
		Sales	Assets
1	Tatas and Birlas	22.28	14.60
2.	Top 11 industrial groups* which has assets more than 150 crores of rupees in 1976.	26.84	17.41
3.	Top 20 industrial groups*	28.66	18.45
4.	Net domestic product of manufacturing sector*	20.43	N.A
5.	Export of manufacturing sector***	11.68	

* Includes Tatas and Birlas

** It relates to production at current prices not sales.

*** It relates to the period 1965 to 1973 and source is Ahluwalia, I.J., (1985), *Industrial Growth in India*, p 118.

Source : Goyal, S.K., (1979), *Monopoly Capital and Public Polity*, pp. 56-7

Table IV

Inflow of Foreign Capital into Private Industrial and Commercial Enterprises and Outflow of Income (Rs. 100 million)			
Year	Inflow	Outflow	Net outflow (-)
1964-65	10.83	6.11	+4.72
1965-66	6.60	6.52	+0.08
1967-68	8.04	9.47	-1.43
1968-69	6.72	9.88	-3.16
1969-70	2.16	10.01	-7.85
1970-71	3.87	10.25	-6.38
1971-72	7.61	10.71	-3.10
1972-73	6.06	11.08	-5.02
Total	51.89	74.03	-22.10

Source : Sau, Ranjit, *op. cit*, p. 55

Table V

Compound Rates of Growth of Agricultural Production from the triennial average of index numbers for the base and terminal years (percentages)			
<i>States</i>	<i>1957-58 to 1963-64</i>	<i>1963-64 to 1971-72</i>	<i>1957-58 to 1978-79</i>
Andhra Pradesh	2.63	-0.23	0.24
Bihar	5.37	2.57	3.37
Gujarat	6.46	1.93	2.73
Karnataka	3.22	4.49	2.58
Kerala	2.20	3.79	2.03
Madhya Pradesh	1.96	1.66	1.09
Maharashtra	1.25	3.66	0.72
Orissa	5.74	0.56	2.63
Punjab/Haryana	3.13	7.48	5.48
Rajasthan	1.70	4.65	2.98
Tamilnadu	3.37	2.68	3.01
Uttar Pradesh	3.21	3.53	2.65
West Bengal	4.32	2.80	3.24

Source : First two columns are from Jose A.V., *Growth and Fluctuation in Indian Agriculture* (memograph) and last column has been estimated from CSO estimates.

D. SUBRAMANYAM REDDY*

Changing Agrarian Relations and State of Peasantry in Andhra During Early Nineteenth Century

BY THE time the British established their power over the Andhra Region as in other territories several developments were taking place both in England and in India and in different regions of Andhra. Consequent to the Industrial Revolution in England, India had lost the position of exporter of goods to England and on the contrary the country had become as a market and primary producer for the British industry¹ And due to the impact of the French Revolution the British capitalists began to demand that their Government should give them equal opportunities in the colonial countries like India.² As a result (from the middle of the eighteenth century, and in particular, from the beginning of the nineteenth century) India had been gradually integrated into the world of modern capitalism, of course, in a subordinate or colonial position which led to the "development of under development"³ As a consequence of this the capitalist elements in the form of land tenures began to penetrate into the agrarian economy of India. Thus a new agrarian structure began to evolve to suit the needs of colonialism⁴ whose "relations" were "primarily economic".⁵ The early land tenures introduced in Bengal and Madras after 1793 were, in fact, direct responses to Britain's new market requirements⁶

Here, in India, at this time, while the Company servants were amassing wealth, the company itself was facing financial bankruptcy and it applied for a loan of £ 1400,000.⁷ The Company was hard pressed for money for investments in India for the purchase of goods which would fetch higher profits in Europe⁸ Thus, India had to be compelled to pay for her exports or for investments in India and also for purchasing China tea for European markets.⁹ Thus, the company was in need of a stable revenue through the extension of cultivation for promoting the trade of the company which was also the main aim of the Bengal settlement¹⁰ All these factors decided the fate of rural India. The decision to settle the revenues permanently with the zamindars at first and later by the ryotwari system was partly necessitated by the political

*Jawahar Bharti, Kavali, Andhra Pradesh.

and economic considerations of England and the needs of the company in India.

They resulted in the "scientific exploitation of India".¹¹ In other words by introducing zamindari system in Andhra the company, in the beginning, was only concerned with extorting the maximum amount of revenue with the minimum expenditure.¹² Sunil Sen says that "In the eighteenth century the Government hardly pursued any development-oriented policy, and the overriding object was the security of the land revenue. Through out the nineteenth century the experiments undertaken by the ruling class in land tenure policy were largely determined by revenue considerations".¹³ As a result the zamindari system collapsed.¹⁴ A number of zamindars failed to pay their peshcush and were always in arrears or in debts with high rate of interest ranging from 12 to 24 percent. They also squeezed ryots to pay their own peshcush¹⁵ (apart from other reasons). Thus several estates were sold or auctioned and there were none to purchase in places like Rajahmundry¹⁶ because of the overassessment which led to zamindari revolts. Moreover the default of zamindars in paying tribute led to heavy losses to the Government.¹⁷

By this time, the ryotwari system was introduced in several places and experiments were being made with it. But the result (or condition) was not much different from that of the zamindari system because its aim too was only to maximise revenues. Under ryotwari, the Government tried to "extend state control into every corner of agricultural life".¹⁸ It had no restrictions on its own powers of enhancing land revenue¹⁹ and thus it was a more profitable system than the zamindari system and the interests and rights of the state could be safeguarded even better under the ryotwari.²⁰ Even the default of a ryot or a few ryots was not at all a loss to the Government. Though it aimed at "emancipation of the petty farmers from the control of the intermediate ones",²¹ the ryots in those areas suffered due to the high pitch of revenue assessment. In 1802 even Munro himself raised the revenue assessment over its previous year and he calculated that the revenues of the state would be more under the ryotwari than under the zamindari system,²² and that is why he wanted the power of regulating assessment and collection to be in the hands of the Government in order to maximise revenue collections.²³ The authorities were highly pleased with the gradual increase of revenue which rose from £ 402, 637 to £ 606, 909, or an increase of 50 per cent within seven years.²⁴ The assessment under the ryotwari, during the early years, was so high that in most of the ryotwari areas including the Ceded districts and Chittoor Pollams (after the revolt of Poligars) a reduction of revenue was recommended.²⁵ Munro, like Cockburn of North Arcot district raised the revenue assessment in order to make it uneconomical to the poligars²⁶ and force them under such conditions to revolt against the British and then to take it as a cause to eliminate them.²⁷ The fall in prices of paddy the monetisation of the economy,²⁸

rigidity in collections, uncertainty of assessment²⁹ and absence of reductions in revenue assessments also added to the sufferings of the ryots³⁰. Thus in both the areas a new layer of exploiters was superimposed on top of the old. As a result, the first three decades of the nineteenth century were characterised by a series of peasant uprisings. The violent and rapid introduction of capitalist elements into the agrarian economy of India were the chief causes of these revolts³¹. As late as in 1836 Bishop Heber expressed that "no native prince demands the rent which we do"³².

PERMANENT ZAMINDARI SETTLEMENT 1802-1805

Now we come to the actual details of those settlements in Andhra. It was in 1784 that the Company was directed to establish in Bengal permanent rules by which the tributes, rents, services of the zamindars, poligars and Rajas and other native holders "should be in future rendered and paid to the United Company"³³. By this time while the servants of the Company were massing fortunes by hook or by crook, the Company itself was facing financial bankruptcy and applied for a loan of £ 1400,000.³⁴ The annual engagements made by Hastings had deprived the Company of an assured income. The Company was hard pressed for investments for the purchase of goods³⁵. India had to be compelled to pay for her exports. The court of Directors directed that a settlement should be made with the zamindars for a period of ten years in the first instance with a view to making it permanent³⁶. Cornwallis also thought "It is for the interest of the State that landed property should fall into the hands of the most frugal and thrifty class of people, who will improve their lands and protect the ryots and thereby promote the general prosperity of the country"³⁷. He believed that if the upper classes were prosperous, all other classes would benefit. Having seen the English landlords bringing about agricultural improvements, "he supposed that he could develop the Indian landlord who would be English in character and loyal towards the British Government in India"³⁸. It was this way of thinking that persuaded him to adopt the zamindari system in Bengal, "whereby the local tax collectors become a landholding class and in return for the land they would assure a permanent revenue to the Government and have a surplus with which to improve and develop their holdings"³⁹. The lawyers of that day believed that the system actually obtaining in England was not only the ancient system of the country but that it was semi-sacred.⁴⁰

Its main architects were English aristocrats and their aristocratic prejudices determined its basic features. The right of private property was sought to be conferred on the zamindar, who was no more than a tax collector and usurped authority during the disintegration of the Mughal empire. The zamindar was invested with the right to collect rent as well as to regulate occupancy of all other tenures. The right belonging to the state was now conferred on individuals. The state, however, could transfer

their rights and confer it on other individuals by open auction for arrears of revenue.⁴¹ While the state revenue alone from the zamindari estates was fixed in perpetuity, the demands of the zamindars on the cultivators were left undefined.⁴² This aspect was left undefined because it was thought that such things would be decided by mutual agreement between the zamindar and cultivators. There was indeed in the regulations a mild provision for the intervention of the state to protect the right of the cultivators.⁴³ But this clause had never been adequately used to protect the peasants.⁴⁴

The Bengal settlement aimed not only at deriving a stable revenue, but also at promoting the extension of cultivation to the waste lands and thereby the trade of the province.⁴⁵ The Company had a stake in the trade in agricultural produce in the Telugu districts on the east coast as in other areas. This required a perennial source of investment.⁴⁶ It was also with the object (of the Company as also of private British merchants) of diverting the Indian merchants and their resources from trade to land and agriculture that the Company introduced the permanent zamindari system.⁴⁷ The competitive power of the agency houses could be lessened, and the Company could perpetuate its monopoly rights.⁴⁸ It was the deliberate policy of the government to confer a right of property in the soil on the zamindar. It was not a confirmation of the *status quo*.⁴⁹ Cornwallis did not care who was the owner of the land so long as it was cultivated and the land revenue was regularly paid.⁵⁰

The principles of the permanent settlement can be traced not only to the economic institutions in England but also to English classical economics and the philosophy of laissez-faire. It was thought that the mutual interests of zamindar and tenants would be regulated by the laws of supply and demand in respect of land and labour. The enlightened self-interest of individuals was considered to be essential for the development of the economy.⁵¹ The minutes of Sir Philip Francis in 1772 and 1776 contained copious references to Adam Smith, Mill and Quesnay.⁵² Land revenue in India was characterised as rent. The state-share of the produce was equated with rent.

The court of Directors, satisfied with the advantages of the permanent settlement as implemented in Bengal, decided to introduce it in other territories in India.⁵³

It was in 1765 that the East India Company obtained a *firman* from the Mughal emperor confirming the cession of the Northern Circars, viz. Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Ellore and Kondapalli. Until 1778 annual settlements were made with the existing zamindars. Sir Thomas Rumbold made a five-year settlement in that year. Annual settlements with all their oppressive practices were resumed in 1783 and continued till 1786 when a three-year settlement was made. The triennial settlement was continued till 1789 and eventually a five years settlement was concluded with the

zamindars who were assessed at two-thirds of their gross-collections. The Guntur Circar acquired in 1788 was settled in the same manner.

Proclaiming the appointment of Collectors in the place of the Chiefs and Councils in 1794, the Government declared itself in favour of the policy of introducing in Andhra the permanent settlement as soon as the resources of the country had been surveyed and estimated.⁵⁴ The Court of Directors of the East India Company approved it in 1795. On the basis of the documents left behind by Lord Cornwallis, Wellesley finally recommended its adoption in the Telugu districts of Coastal Andhra. Moreover, until then no fixed principle of revenue administration had been successful. And hence the permanent settlement was thought of as an effective remedy.⁵⁵ The Government directed the Board of Revenue to prepare a plan for a permanent settlement with the zamindars in the lands in which the property is vested immediately in the Company. It instructed the Board to form small sub-division of estates and to transfer the proprietary rights of all such lands to native landholders.⁵⁶ A permanent assessment was fixed on the basis of the receipts of the last thirteen years. The amount was fixed at two-thirds of the gross produce received by the zamindars. Beginning with a reduced assessment for the first few years it was proposed to increase it annually until a full assessment could be made permanent.⁵⁷ The settlement was to be made decennial in the first instance and permanent on the approval of the Directors. But Wellesley went ahead with the permanent settlement, as it would greatly facilitate the settlement of the haveli lands and secure more advantageous terms for the Government.⁵⁸ The step was approved by the Directors.⁵⁹

The Special Commission appointed in 1802 for the purpose of settling the permanent assessment of zamindars resolved to grant 'sanads' to all permanently assessed zamindars specifying their obligations and rights.⁶⁰ The permanent settlement was first introduced into the *jagir* which included part of Chengalput district and parts of modern Chittoor and Nellore districts. The lands here were mostly 'haveli'. They were split up into estates or 'muttas' and sold.⁶¹ By 1803, the permanent settlement was introduced in the four divisions of Vizagapatam, the Western Pollams of Venkatagiri, Kalahasti, Bommarajupalem (Karvetinagar) and Sydapore etc.⁶² The special Commission was abolished in September, 1803 as it had done the job entrusted to it. The Board of Revenue, which took over its duties, permanently settled the rest of the zamindaris in Coastal Andhra.⁶³

The zamindars were declared proprietors of arable and waste land within their estates. New zamindars came into existence in places where the haveli lands were auctioned to them. The purchasers of the muttas, called muttahdars, also enjoyed all the privileges of the zamindars. The right of the zamindar over the produce of the land was restricted to the customary rates. They were directed to grant pattas to the ryots, but the

latter could not get pattas in a great majority of cases, instead the zamindars' extortion oppressed and pauperised the peasants.⁶⁴ Where the zamindar infringed on the customary rights of the ryots, the ryots were to seek redress in the civil courts, which were established in the districts. The zamindar was to collect one half of the produce and remit two-thirds of the half to the Government. The East India Company took away from the zamindars those rights of sovereign power which they had usurped in the days of the disintegration of the Mughal empire. They were no longer permitted to keep a military force. The function of preserving law and order was now exercised by the provincial government.⁶⁵ The rights which belonged to them and the privileges which they should no longer exercise were all clearly stated. For instance they were forbidden to collect salt and salt-petre revenue, tax on liquor and intoxicating drugs, all professional taxes, taxes for police establishments. But the zamindars were confirmed in the possessions of their estates in perpetuity and their peshkush fixed.⁶⁶ The estate holder was enjoined to maintain the tanks and water sources in his jurisdiction. Only large irrigation works useful to the country were kept under the supervision of the Government.⁶⁷

OVER-ASSESSMENT AND COLLAPSE OF THE SETTLEMENT

The zamindari system collapsed under the weight of contradictions and the high pitch of revenue collections. The settlement was completed in 1805. It received a check in 1806. All the ancient zamindars were assessed at two thirds of the collections made therein⁶⁸ with reference to detailed accounts. Where there were no fixed assets no proportion of the gross 'Jumma' was taken. The Guntur circular was assessed on the basis of the average collections during the previous thirteen years.⁶⁹ In a few cases like Venkatagiri, Kalahasti and Karvetinagar, the peshkush was equal to their military services without reference to their assets. In Godavari it was determined on the average collections of several preceding years less a deduction in favour of proprietors.⁷⁰ In the case of newly created estates the permanent settlement fixed such high peshkush, that they collapsed under the weight of over assessment. Many of them were advertised for sale and when there was no purchaser the Government acquired them. In Godavari, Krishna and Ganjam the permanent settlement completely failed. The zamindaries of Godavari fell to pieces one after another. Ganjam estates had no better fate and in Krishna district the estate holders voluntarily surrendered their title deeds. By 1815 some ancient and many proprietary estates were auctioned inajahmundry and as there were no proper bidders the government purchased them.

Moreover, the government was convinced that the interests of the state and the rights could be safeguarded only under the ryotwari system therefore ordered that in all the districts acquired from the Nawab of

Arcot the ryotwari system should be introduced.⁷¹ Struck by the agrarian discontent and poverty of the people Thomas Munro recorded at a later date his impressions and suggestions in a minute "because of our creating new proprietary zamindars not reserving a single village in which we could have direct control over the ryots, and transferring to those proprietors, the karanamams who are the source of all informations and diverting the circar lands from which our influence arose, we have placed the prospect of good order among the petty Rajaships."⁷² He further suggested "the gradual extension of the Circari lands" "The extension of the circar lands gives us also a great influence over all the military classes residing upon them"⁷³ In another famous minute Munro concluded that "we have attempted to create a kind of landed property, which had never existed. We have relinquished the rights which the sovereign always possessed in the soil and deprived the real owners, the occupant ryots of their proprietary rights and bestowed them on zamindars. Every.. ryot ought to pay his own rent and that of his tenants to the Government officer, instead ryots are made to pay their public rents to a zamindar, they will soon lose their independence become his tenants, and probably be sinking into the class of labourers".⁷⁴

But the permanent zamindari system facilitated regularity in the collection of revenue. It also exempted the Government from the duty of making annual revenue settlements, undertaking investigations into fraud in revenue collections and expending money in the repairs of reservoirs. It also freed the British from the policy of coercion in enforcing the payment of dues by the zamindars and poligars.⁷⁵

The settlement afforded an easy means of collection. But the ryots on the other hand suffered, though Lord Cornwallis admitted that the ryot had property in the land he cultivated, that the zamindars were not permitted to injure the customary rights of the ryots, and that the Government retained power to protect the rights of the ryots.⁷⁶ The same view was conveyed by the Board of Revenue to the Collectors.⁷⁷ Section 2 of Regulation XXV of 1802 conferred the proprietary right in the soil on the zamindars and in order to mitigate the abuse of this section, Regulation IV of 1822 was passed which declared that the former regulation was not intended to define, limit, infringe or destroy the actual rights of the tenants. But unfortunately the rights of the peasants were nowhere defined and thus the cultivators were exposed to oppression since the beginning of its introduction until the tenancy reforms of the 20th century.

ORIGINS OF RYOTWARI SYSTEM IN BARAMAHAL

As the collapse of the zamindari system, the success of the Ryotwari system and the anxiety of the East India Company to have more revenue increased the British decided to introduce the Ryotwari system in as many places as possible. The principles of the Ryotwari system were first

formulated in Baramahal and Salem, which were placed under Captain Read and his assistant Thomas Munro in 1792. Captain Read was known to have "an intimate knowledge of the language and manners of the people, and a happy talent for the investigation of everything connected with revenue."⁷⁸ To start with, he proposed a lease settlement for five years a period in which he would have sufficient time to complete the survey and assessment of the arable lands. The Board of Revenue recorded at the time that "a thousand advantages must result from a plan of permanency, not only by exciting the people to improvements but by enabling the government to effect a reduction of the revenue officers . . . by reducing in general the charges of collection, by ensuring regular payments, by rendering the revenue accounts more simple; and above all by putting a stop to intrigue and corrupt practices."⁷⁹ Read made a detailed enquiry of the state of agriculture and the existing mode of revenue assessment. In his report to the Governor-General he was in favour of giving villages or divisions of districts in perpetual management to their present farmers and to tax away a certain proportion of their rent which would be the same as allowing them a commission upon their collection.⁸⁰ Read at first thought that settlement with individual peasants "would be detrimental to cultivation and make revenue precarious."⁸¹ The settlement with wealthy individuals, to start with, was therefore preferred. He had arrived at the gross revenue after checking the village registers, the ryots' estimates of the produce and the offers of the farmers. He believed that the rent should be half the gross produce in an average year to be paid in money.⁸² He stated his principles thus: "The greater the division of the country into farms, the more beneficial to the community and favourable to the population, and the larger the farmers are, to a certain extent, the more certain the increase of cultivation and the receipts of revenue."⁸³

While admiring the zeal and devotion with which Read set about his tasks, Munro criticised his master in the following thoughtful words: "Revenue ought not to be all that the subject can pay but only what the necessities of the state require. It is neither wise nor just to demand more."⁸⁴ This friendly criticism by his able assistant had a salutary effect upon the thinking of Read. He found in 1795 the lease system to be impracticable. He found that the village headmen abused their power and oppressed the peasantry by making extra collections and levying unauthorised perquisites. Therefore, he tried to protect the cultivating ryots by dividing the plots of land among them and establishing the forms of peasant proprietorship. They would thus be "advanced to be proprietors of their own farms and to be more immediately under the collector's protection."⁸⁵ The value of every peasant's land was ascertained. He was given a patta (title deed) specifying the extent of his land and the tax to be paid. The total assessment of the village was laid down, and the

village headman who was the collector of revenue was strictly forbidden to meddle with the rates of assessment or the total estimate of revenue. He himself was allotted a plot of ground as remuneration for his duties⁸⁶ This sort of arrangement was made in each of the then divisions, thus attempting the "emancipation of the petty farmers from the control of the intermediate ones."⁸⁷ Munro, however, thought that the ryots should be guarded against the oppression of the farmers, by giving them secure and perpetual possession of the land.⁸⁸

Read's alternative settlement was announced in his circular dated 10th December, 1796. It was decided to fix the assessment of each field permanently. The ryots were now free to "extend or reduce their farms according to their circumstances by retaining or rejecting certain fields as they choose from year to year." Munro strongly criticised the provision for annual changes in the extent of land a ryot might cultivate on the ground that it would discourage long tenures. "After the farmers understand it perfectly, they will prefer annual leases to those of a later date because they give them the same security and advantages, without hindering them from throwing up their lands whenever they can get a better bargain anywhere else."⁸⁹ He further suggested a reduction of twenty percent in the assessment of all lands. He also pleaded for handing over possession of land in perpetuity to the ryots, so that such a security will make lands saleable, and "until they shall be saleable, cultivation will never be carried to any high point of perfection nor will revenue be permanent."⁹⁰ Both agreed that a permanent money assessment should be fixed on each field and land should be the property of the cultivator. Munro however did not want to permit the ryot the freedom to throw up or take on new fields every year. Finally Munro came round to agree with Read on this point in his letter to Read on July 18, 1797.⁹¹ He concluded that larger farmers would be a drag on the security of the revenue. For their failure to pay the stipulated sum would be due not only to failure of crops, but also due to corruption, intrigue and fraudulent practices. Such failures would be a great loss to the state, while the default of a small ryot would reduce the revenue collections by a small amount. "Small farms", he said, "would lessen the number of poor" and "raise a crowd of men of small, but of independent property, who when they are certain, that they will themselves enjoy the benefits of every extraordinary exertion of labour, work with a spirit of activity which would in vain be expected from the tenants or servants of great land holders. . . were there any necessity of making great farmers it could be done by wronging all the petty farmers and diminishing revenue."⁹²

The final statement of the principles of the Ryotwari system, communicated by Thomas Munro, is given below, as it is of historic significance and was destined to change the agrarian relations of a large part of the country in the nineteenth century.

"The plan which it appears to me would be best calculated to secure to the people, the fruits of their industry and to government a permanent revenue is comprised under the following heads

- 1 A reduction of fifteen percent to be made in the lease assessment
2. The country to be rented immediately of government by small farmers as at present, everyone receiving just as much land as he demands
- 3 Settlements to be annual, that is, every man to be permitted to give up, or take whatever land he pleases every year
- 4 Everyman to have a part or the whole of his land in lease, who wishes it, and in order to encourage the application for leases, all lands held under annual tenures, to be taken from the occupants and given to such other farmers as may demand them in lease, on their paying to government, as purchase money, one year's rent for any particular field or one half year's rent for the whole farm
- 5 Villages and districts to be responsible for all individual failures.
6. All lands included in the lease should remain invariably at the rent then fixed after the proposed reduction of fifteen percent
7. All lands, not included in the lease, should be rented at the average of the village to which they belong,
8. Lands included in the lease, being given up and allowed to be waste for any number of years should when again occupied, pay, the very first year, the full rent as before
9. All castes, whether native or aliens, to pay the same rent for the same land,
- 10 No additional rents ever to be demanded for improvements The farmer, who by digging a well or building a tank, converts dry land into garden or rice fields, to pay no more than the original rent of the ground
- 11 No reduction of the established rent ever to be allowed except when the cochineal plant, mulberry, etc., are cultivated"⁹³

RYOTWARI SETTLEMENT IN THE CEDED DISTRICTS

On the acquisition of the Ceded Districts by the treaty of October, 12, 1800, the East India Company set about the task of reorganizing the administration of the territories. Thomas Munro was appointed Principal Collector with four subordinate Assistant Collectors.⁹⁴ Thomas Munro was now presiding over a country which had been impoverished by the famines of 1792 and 1793 coupled with the depredations of the hordes of poligars, military adventures, the Mysore wars and the Nizam's administration⁹⁵

On his assumption of office he had to deal with eighty poligars and their thirty thousand peons. They were at first in no mood to recognize the supremacy of the Company administration. Their original duties to resist and put down robbers, to bring offenders to justice and to make good the loss of stolen property, thus exercising civil and military jurisdiction, had faded out.⁹⁶ Despite their depredations they could not be subdued by the Nawabs of Cuddaph, Hyderabad, Tippu Sultan or even the Marathas.⁹⁷ Munro was asked by the Madras Government to appreciate the advantage to be expected from the continuance of hereditary possessions to the descendants of ancient families.⁹⁸ Munro on the other hand believed that unless he put down the poligars he would not be able to go ahead with the organisation of revenue administration. He preferred to wait, till his administration was established, and for an opportunity to declare them rebels before crushing them.⁹⁹ As a first step he raised the revenue assessment on the poligars with a view to making it uneconomical for them to keep their troops.¹⁰⁰ He changed the peshkush into a land rent. And finally he asked General Campbell to reduce their military strength for opposing the Company's Government.¹⁰¹ He then issued a proclamation to the poligars of Ceded Districts and then sent out Campbell to suppress them.¹⁰² By the beginning of 1802, Munro was able to report that he had reduced the poligars and dispossessed them. Though there were some minor poligars who continued their hit and run tactics, there was no insurrection of any considerable force.¹⁰³

The court of Directors disapproved of his policy of violent suppression of the poligars. They wanted to follow a policy of moderation and conciliation to ensure the future fidelity of the poligars.¹⁰⁴ Munro strongly defended his action. He wrote that the poligars if reinstated would never become anything like country gentlemen which the term zamindar has often erroneously been said to imply.¹⁰⁵

THE SETTLEMENT OF REVENUE

The very first settlement was a village settlement. The heads of villages had to collect the revenue from the peasants and pay a lumpsum to the government, leaving the surplus to the headmen as remuneration for collections. The headmen were not considered as landlords, though they had inams for their subsistence.¹⁰⁶ Munro was not in favour of handing over villages to headmen, for then "they would take advantage of the present possession and endeavour to enrich themselves by oppressing the tenants."¹⁰⁷ But his ryotwari system introduced later led to a settlement which provided for the elimination of the intermediary farmers of revenue. Every ryot held his land from the government and was given a patta or title deed. The revenue was regulated by the quality of the land and the condition of the cultivation. The revenue varied from two-fifths to three-fifth of the produce, and the value was reckoned in money.¹⁰⁸ Munro was emphatic

about the extirpation of the poligars and the elimination of the farmers for he believed that the final power of regulating assessment and collection should belong to the Government, in order to maximise revenue collection and infuse confidence in the ryots.¹⁰⁹ With this object in view Munro began a survey of all lands in the Ceded Districts and completed it in 1806. The first report of Munro dated November 30, 1806 describes this mode of settlement before the completion of the survey. The second report dated July 26, 1807 describes this survey and the assessment based on it. In the beginning, therefore, the headman ascertained which lands each ryot wanted to cultivate. He permitted the ryots to relinquish lands not required by them, and such lands were given to needy ryots. The rents were fixed at a later stage by the collector, after estimating the yield of the crop. The Tahsildar visited each village, supervised the cultivation in villages, made advances to poorer ryots, for purchasing seed, ploughs and cattle. He assembled the ryots in the respective villages and ascertained the lands held by the ryots. He took an account of occupied and unoccupied lands. He toured again to find out the conditions of the crops.¹¹⁰ Then the Collector went on his tour in September-October, assembled the ryots in a few villages, and estimated the crops, comparing the information with the data supplied by the Tahsildars and the village officers. He compared them with past accounts and made the final assessment. The full rent of waste lands was collected only if they had been in cultivation from 2 to 7 years. He granted remission where the crops were bad, but it was very rarely made. Then the Collector granted each ryot a patta which contained the extent of the land and the rents for the year. This settlement was conducted in all the villages within a month or five weeks.¹¹¹ Under ryotwari system the ryot "has the advantage of knowing . . . fixed rents of the different fields . . . their total amount . . . limit of his rent not only for the present but for every succeeding year."¹¹²

LAND SURVEY, CLASSIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

During 1802-1807 Munro concluded a survey of the Ceded Districts. Though it is said to be not so good as the modern survey, parties of six to ten surveyors headed by an Inspector measured all land, roads, sites of towns and villages, beds of tanks and rivers, wastes and forests. Names and numbers were assigned to all cultivable fields. They used a standard measure, a chain of 33 feet. Four square chains made an acre.¹¹³ The assessors followed them, two of them for each area measured by ten surveyors. Accompanied by the headman and the ryots he went to the fields and classified them according to quality. Wet lands were subdivided into five or six classes, and dry lands into eight or ten classes. The classification was based on local opinion. The work of the assessors was supervised by head assessors.¹¹⁴ The classification was then examined in the collector's office in the presence of the ryots, patels and karnams. "The business

was began by fixing the sum which was to be the total revenue of the district . by comparing the collection under the native princes, under the company's Government from its commencement, the estimates of the ordinary, and head assessors and the opinions of the most intelligent natives."¹¹⁵ The assessment of the whole district was fixed and then the assessment of each village was examined. Remissions were granted where necessary and this loss was made good in prosperous villages

By 1802, he settled the assessment of 208918 independent farmers and gave them "cowles" or engagements¹¹⁶ The collections amounted to 14, 13, 614 star pagodas which showed an increase of 29,100 pagodas over the previous year¹¹⁷ Munro thought that the peasants were impoverished and should not have been pressed so hard to maximise revenue collections.¹¹⁸ But he preferred the direct settlement with individual peasants in the larger interests of the state and society.¹¹⁹

Munro believed that the ryots should be allowed to take up as much land as their resources permitted or to give up land according to their "circumstances" He suggested a reduction of 25 percent in the survey assessment and 30 percent of the assessment on the cultivation of waste lands. He proposed that every ryot should be given perpetual ownership of the land so long as he paid the customary assessment¹²⁰ This procedure of settlement would make land saleable in about twenty to twenty-five years. Munro thought that only after lands became saleable the creation of private property in land would be a great benefit to the ryots.¹²¹ At the beginning of 1807 Munro reported the completion of survey and desired the Government to retain unoccupied land to regulate its distribution.¹²² He forecast that the Ceded Districts would yield 18 lakhs of pagodas in course of time under the ryotwari system.¹²³ The principles on which he reiterated the ryotwari settlement are given below.¹²⁴

1. The settlement shall be ryotwari
2. The amount of the settlement shall increase or decrease according to the extent of the land in cultivation
3. A reduction of twenty-five percent on all land shall be made in the survey rate of assessment.
4. An additional reduction of eight percent or thirty-three percent in all shall be allowed on all lands watered by wells or by water raised by machinery from rivers . . provided the cultivators keep the wells or embankments in repair at their own expense. A similar reduction shall be allowed on the lands watered by small tanks, whenever the cultivators agree to bear the expense of repairs
5. Every ryot shall be at liberty at the end of every year to throw up a part of his land or to occupy more according to his circumstances, but whether he throws up or occupies, he shall not be permitted to select but shall take a rigid proportional shares

- of the good and bad together.
6. Every ryot as long as he pays the rent of his land, shall be considered as the complete owner of the soil, and shall be at liberty to let it to a tenant without any hesitation as to rent and to sell it as he pleases.
 7. No remissions shall be made on ordinary occasions, for bad crops or other accidents, should failures occur, which cannot be made good from the property or land of the defaulters, the villages in which they happen, shall be liable for them to the extent of ten per cent, additional on the rent of the remaining ryots but no further.
 8. All unoccupied land shall remain in the hands of the Government and rent of whatever part of it may be hereafter cultivated shall be added to the public revenue.

THE EFFECTS OF THE LAND REVENUE SYSTEMS

The East India Company had a monopoly of Indian trade, whose main object was "to secure a supply of the products of India and the East Indies (especially spices, cotton goods and silk goods) which formed a ready market in England and Europe"¹²⁵ The company used its sovereign power in India to extract through the new revenue settlements the maximum revenue to be used as 'annual investments' which gave them large dividends in European markets. But the free traders and the manufacturing class attacked the Company and alleged that it was more interested in extracting tribute than in advancing the interests of British industry. They demanded an end to its commercial functions and the reorganization of the revenue administration to make India as "an agrarian hinterland" in order to serve the interests of the capitalists of Britain.

It is the interests of the Company and those of the free traders and manufacturing classes that led to the introduction of new revenue settlements in the form of zamindari, mahalwari, village and ryotwari settlements in India. Thus, the type of British rule and the principles and working of the revenue systems were pre-determined with the object of serving the interests of the Company which needed perpetual and rising sources of revenue and those of the British capitalists who were desirous to extend cultivation through the new revenue systems and to make this extended cultivation serve their industrial needs. This means that getting higher revenue or benefits was the object of the British and to achieve these ends they used the new revenue systems¹²⁶

Even more important than the actual increase in the burden of the assessments in the initial period was the revolution in the system of assessments and the registration of the ownership of land in which English economic and legal conceptions were made to replace, or were superimposed on the entirely different conceptions and institutions of the traditional

Indian economy The latter were now replaced by the system of fixed money payments assessed on land, regularly due in cash irrespective of the year's production, in good or bad harvests, and whether more or less of the land was cultivated or not and, in the overwhelming majority of settlements, fixed on individual land holders, whether direct cultivators or landlords appointed by the state¹²⁷ This payment was commonly spoken of as 'rent', thus revealing that the peasantry had become in fact tenants, whether directly of the state or of the state-appointed landlords, even though at the same time possessing certain proprietary and traditional rights The introduction of the English landlord system, individual landholding, mortgage and sale of lands, and of English legal conceptions alien to Indian economy and administered by an alien rule which combined in itself, legislative, executive and judicial functions, completed the process. By this transformation the British assumed ultimate possession of the land, converting the peasantry into tenants, and landlords into an aristocracy, who could both equally be ejected for failure of payment¹²⁸ The previous self-governing village community was robbed of its economic functions, as well as of its administrative role¹²⁹

The ryotwari system, no less than the zamindari system cut right through Indian institutions. Indeed, the Madras Board of Revenue at the time fought a long and losing battle against it, and urged instead a collective settlement with the village communities, known as a Mauzzawari settlement They wrote "we find them (British officers) . . . dissolving the . . . Hindu village, and newly assessing and parcelling out the lands, . . . professing to limit their demand to each field, but in fact, by establishing such limit as unattainable maximum, assessing the ryot at discretion binding the ryot by force to the plough, compelling him to till land acknowledged to be over-assessed, dragging him back to it if he absconded . . . taking from him all . . . and leaving him nothing but his bullocks and seed grain"¹³⁰

Thus the life of the peasants was positioned between two sets of oppressors, one hereditary and native, and another, the intruding and foreign, viz the zamindars and the poligars on the one hand and the Company on the other¹³¹ The peasant, therefore, suffered due to rack-renting and over assessment irrespective of the type of settlement that was in operation At the commencement of the ryotwari settlement, "the tax was determined in a somewhat rough-and-ready manner," which was supposed to have been rectified later.¹³² The cultivating expenses and other miscellaneous taxes to be paid by people left them with very nominal amounts barely enough for their sustenance¹³³

As a result revenue defalcations became a regular feature in the Ceded districts But the Board of Revenue insisted on ruthless collections irrespective of what happened to the ryot¹³⁴ The revenue collections in the Ceded districts rose steeply. In 1800-1801 it was Rs. 12 lakhs and

within one year in 1801-1802 it rose to Rs. 17 lakhs and to 18 lakhs in 1802-1803 and by 1804-1805 to Rs. 23 lakhs¹³⁵ Munro was, therefore, obliged to recommend remissions, but they were stalled by the Board of Revenue.¹³⁶ The Madras presidency was the most heavily taxed in matters of land revenue. It was calculated that for every one lakh of population the amount collected as land revenue was Rs. 10,05,455 in Bengal, Rs. 16,71,965 in Bombay and Rs. 23,12,465 in Madras¹³⁷ •

Savage methods of torture were employed to collect revenues from people and afraid of the dire consequences, they never complained of it¹³⁸ The attitude of the Company was aptly described by Lord Macaulay, "Govern leniently, but send us more money, practice justice and moderation, but send us more money, be the father and oppressor of the people, be just and unjust, moderate and rapacious."¹³⁹ As a result rural indebtedness increased throwing ryots to the mercy of village 'sahukars' (moneylenders).¹⁴⁰

On the other hand agriculture was in a bad shape with its heavy dependency upon the vagaries of the monsoon, infertile soil, outdated implements and little or no encouragement in the shape of taccavi loans to the peasants either from the government or the zamindars¹⁴¹ Moreover the condition of irrigation works was far from satisfactory¹⁴² The famines added to the wretchedness of the agricultural population including tenants, weavers and agricultural labourers.

The permanent settlement with its concepts of land ownership and a permanent assessment, was envisaged to stimulate industry promote agriculture and augment the general wealth and prosperity¹⁴³ It conferred ownership of the land upon the former feudal intermediaries who held political and revenue powers over large tracts of land¹⁴⁴ The sponsors of the settlement did not care who the land owner was, so long as it was cultivated and land revenue was regularly paid.¹⁴⁵ Unfortunately the rights of the peasants were nowhere defined, and thus the cultivators were exposed to oppression.¹⁴⁶ The zamindars never showed interest in either the improvement of land or agricultural production. The settlement, contrary to expectations, did not introduce capitalistic farming in India (It only made ryots dependent on the zamindars.¹⁴⁷) On the other hand several estates were either auctioned or surrendered because of the inability of the zamindars to pay peshcush¹⁴⁸ Thus the failure of the permanent settlement in the Northern Circars led to misrule and anarchy in the sphere of revenue administration

On the other hand under the ryotwari system, the benefit of every ryot, being a peasant proprietor at a fixed assessment, proved illusory. The fault lay mainly in the overassessment of land and exacting demands of the administration¹⁴⁹ This made agriculture completely unremunerative and prevented the formation of capital within the agricultural economy. Also it blocked the way of the flow of outside capital entering into the

agricultural sector¹⁵⁰ Peasants who were in acute need of cash to pay land revenues, fell into the hands of "Sahukars" (Moneylenders) who became de-facto landlords. In many instances the money lender and the landlords were one and the same.¹⁵¹ Vincent Smith says that "the rural population wanted two things, first a light assessment, secondly the minimum of official interference"^{151-A} It is very difficult to resist the conclusion that the Company's revenue policy failed to achieve both these. This probably accounts for the delay in the emergence of a powerful middle class during the early British rule in spite of the introduction of English education in India.

Moreover lack of a proper study of the customs and institutions in the villages, the base of the revenue structure, resulted in failure of successfully implementing the settlements¹⁵² Apart from these the British administrators during the first quarter of the 19th century were influenced by utilitarian ideas which to a large extent influenced the official policy of Indian land revenue¹⁵³ Pressed to pay land revenue in cash the peasants not only borrowed money but also took to the production of cash crops and were thus exposed to the fluctuations of money market¹⁵⁴ The legal system introduced by the British also brought far reaching changes in the agricultural sector. Now poor peasants were placed at the mercy of courts where money lenders could get favourable decisions by engaging lawyers.¹⁵⁵ Another thing introduced by the British was the system of eviction from land. Earlier, peasants could not be evicted from their lands as the traditional village system was relatively considerate to them. Thus, the break-up of the old political and economic order had a deep impact on society,¹⁵⁶ The conquerors of India prior to the East India Company rule "had effected no more than political change but England had struck at the heart of the social system in Indian village".¹⁵⁷ The English dissolved them not only by blowing up their economical basis but also by their commercial enterprises.¹⁵⁸ It is this changing nature of the land revenue policy of the company that made Baden-Powell sum up the situation as follows. "The revenue chapter . a record of a series of experiments in assessment ; reduction and enhancements, changes in one direction and another following each other in somewhat bewildering order."¹⁵⁹

1. It was first on the basis of the plunder of India by merchant capital in the second half of the 18th century that modern England was built up This transformed India from an exporter to importer of cotton goods and finally leading to exploitation by industrial capital (R Palme Dutt, *India To-day* Calcutta, 1970 Second Indian edition), pp 99, 108-10 & 112 Eric Stokes (ed) *The peasant and the Raj* New Delhi, 1978, p 27, Sarojini Regam, *Highlights of the Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh* Hyderabad, 1972, p 14)
- 2 "It (colonialism) is a well-structured 'whole', a distinct social formation (system) or sub-formation (sub-system) in which the basic control of the economy and society

- is in the hands of a foreign capitalist class which functions in the colony (or semi-colony) through a dependent and subservient economic, social, political and intellectual structure whose forms can vary with the changing conditions of the historical development of capitalism as a worldwide system" Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (New Delhi, 1979) p 26
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 - 4 *Ibid.*, p 25
 - 5 J S Furnivall, *Colonial policy and Practice* (1956, reprint), cited in Bipan Chandra, *op cit*, p. 7
 - 6 Ramakrishna Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (Berlin, 1955) p 231
 - 7 M. Pattabhirama Reddy (hereafter mentioned as M P R.) *East India Company in Andhra with special refrence to Agrarian Relations, 1757-1857* (unpublished Ph D thesis, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, 1981, a copy secured from the author), p 153
 - 8 *Ibid.*, pp 154 & 204
 - 9 Eric Stokes, *op cit*, p. 10.
 - 10 *Preamble of Regulation II of 1793, Bengal Regulations*
 - 11 R Palme Dutt, *op cit*, p 116
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 - 15 M P R, *op cit*, p 258
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p 170
 - 17 *Ibid.*, p 182.
 - 18 Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Guntur District (1788-1848) A History of local influence and central Authority in South India*, (Oxford, 1965) p 66.
 - 19 Bipan Chandra, *op cit*, p 433
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 - 21 *Colonel Read to the Board of Revenue, 12th October, 1974*
 - 22 *Revenue Despatches to England*, vol 8, 23rd March, 1804, pp. 62-65
 - 23 *Munro the Wellesley, 10th July, 1802*
 - 24 *The Fifth report* (hereafter mentioned F R) edited by Walter Kelly Firminger of the selected committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company, 28th July, 1812 Calcutta, 1918, vol I F R p 124, A V Ramana Rao, *the Economic Development of Andhra Pradesh, 1766-1957*, (Bombay, 1958), p 80
 - 25 M P R, *op cit*, p 202
 - 26 *Ibid.*, p 189
 - 27 *Munro to Government*, 18th March, 1801, 3rd April, 1801, 27th March, 1801, 1st April, 1801, *Munro to Webb*, 6th April, 1801, *Government to Campbell*, 3rd April, 1801, *Munro to Board of Revenue* 22nd Feb 1803, 4th April, 1805
 - 28 *Minute of the Board of Revenue* dated 11th June 1855 gives the fluctuating price list of paddy etc from 1801 to 1834
 - 29 Bipan Chandra, *Rise and growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, (New Delhi, 1965) pp 403-4
 - 30 *Munro to Captain Road, 5th September, 1797*, J B W Dykes, *Salem, An Indian Collectorate* (Madras, 1853) pp 164-6
 - 31 Shiva Kumar, *op cit*, p 20.
 - 32 Bishop Heber, *Memoirs and correspondence*, (1830), vol II, p 413
 - 33 M P R, *op cit*, p 153
 - 34 *Ibid*

- 35 *Ibid* , p 154
- 36 F R *op cit* , vol I, p 14
- 37 Ross, Cornwallis, vol I, pp 552-7, cited in M P R , *op cit* , p 155
- 38 George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India, 1784-1858* (London, 1916) p 45
- 39 *Ibid*
- 40 James Mill *The History of British India*, Book VI, chapter I (London 1848) p 492
- 41 *Section VII Article Sixth, Regulation I, 1793, in Bengal Regulations*
- 42 A D Campbell, *Papers on Land Revenue of India in Report of Select Committee of East India Affairs 1832*, Vol VIII, Appendix p 15
- 43 *Section VIII, Act VI, col 5 Regulation I of 1793, Bengal Regulations*
- 44 Campbell, *op cit* p 15
- 45 *Preamble of Regulation II of 1793 op. cit*
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48. Amles Tripathi, *op cit* , pp 1-36
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51. Firminger's Historical introduction to F R , vol I, *op cit*
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- 61 *Revenue Despatches to England*, 9th March, 1802, 29th May, 1802, and 3rd August, 1802
- 62 *Revenue Despatches to England*, 27th March, 1804, para 52
- 63 *Ibid* , para 75
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- 102 Government to Campbell, 3rd April, 1801, Munro to Board of Revenue, 22nd February, 1805, 4th March, 1805
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- 117 *Ibid*
118. Munro to Cockburn, 5th September 1802
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- 126 Thompson and Garrat recorded thus: "The history of the pre-mutiny assessments is a series of unsuccessful efforts to extract an 'economic rent' which was frequently identified with the 'net produce' . There is no doubt that much suffering was caused, both in Madras and Bombay, by the heavy assessments imposed during the first quarter of the nineteenth century "
- (Thompson and Garrott, *Rise and fulfilment of British rule in India*, p 427, cited in R Palme Dutt, *op cit* , p. 224-25)
- 127 R Palme Dutt, *op cit* , p 228
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- 150 Neelamani Mukherji, *The Ryotwari System in Madras* (Calcutta, 1962) Chapter Ten, pp 254-313
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- progress of the Madras presidency during the last forty years of British Administration* (Madras, 1883) p 254
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155. *Ibid.*
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ASHOK K UPADHYAY*

*Colonial Economy and Variations in Tribal Exploitation :
A Comparative Study in Thana and Khandesh
Districts c 1818-1940*

THE BASIC theme of this paper is to highlight the variations in the subsumption of tribals in Thana and Khandesh districts during the British period. Even as the colonial economy universalized contracts in land and labour, the specificities of tribal existence in the two districts and the conditions of the local economics in general shaped the particular land relations that emerged during the colonial period and created the peculiar 'sites' occupied by the tribals in the two regions. In some crucial respects however there were common elements that can be discerned in the structure of property relations and their reproduction in the respective areas.

Section I of the paper highlights some crucial elements of the pre-British economy and tribal existence in the two regions. Section II highlights aspects of the colonial economy that generated the forces leading to the differential impact on tribals. Even as tribal pauperisation was officially recognized, some aspects of the colonial culture legitimised such pauperisation in perspectives that are existent to this day.

I

KHANDESH AND THANA IN THE PRE-BRITISH PERIOD

Dhule and Jalgaon districts make up the Khandesh region of Maharashtra. Khandesh is bounded on the west by Gujarat and in the east by the Vidarbha part of Maharashtra. In the south it is bounden by the Nasik district and the Marathwada part of Maharashtra. In the northern part it borders on Madhya Pradesh. The Tapi Basin that we are concentrating upon lies in the north-west of Dhule district comprising talukas of Shahade, Talode and Nandurbar.

The Tapi river flows east-west across the district cutting the district into two almost equal halves. It forms a basin from the beginning of the

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Shahade taluka which broadens into a strip of extremely fertile plain of about 15 to 20 miles in width at its broadest. In the north of the Shahade and Talode talukas, the plains end with the steep rise of the Satpuda mountains which form ridge after ridge of rising mountains. Most of the parts of Akkalkuwa taluka which bounds the Talode taluka on the west is taken up by the Satpudas with a relatively narrow strip of the north-west basin included in its southern region. The Nandurbar taluka lies to the south of the Tapi. Here the plains end with a slow rise and increasingly rocky soil to end into the Sahyadri and Galna hills in the south-west. The Nawapur taluka which bounds Nandurbar taluka to the west lies entirely in this slow rise with a sparse forest covering a large part.

European travellers in the 16th century had described Khandesh as a rich and well peopled country yielding great abundance of grain, cotton wool and sugar with a big market for dry fruits. The husbandmen described by them were the Kunbis, the Bhils and the Gond Adivasis as the main class of cultivators.¹ Contemporary Moghul records showed that the area north of the Tapi (comprising the Shahde-Taloda region today) was exclusively peopled and tilled by the Adivasi tribal population *settled on land*², and ruled by the Moghuls through Rajput, Muslim as well as Maratha feudatories alongside the Adivasi chieftains.³

It is however relevant to point out that the prosperity of the region, indicated also by the high revenues of some talukas,⁴ was not predicated on the production of Adivasi cultivated lands. It was the crucial position of Khandesh on trade routes and the production of non-Adivasi cultivators on the fertile plains that contributed to the prosperity of the region. The importance of Khandesh as a nodal point in the trade-route in fact antedated Mughal rule. But it was during the relative administrative peace following Moghul sovereignty that Khandesh's towns became important links in the trade both within and without the country,⁵ forming as they did the confluence of the north-south trade along the Agra road and the east-west through Nandurbar. Adivasi existence formed a relatively autonomous enclave in the region tolerated in times of peace and stable trade movements.

But not for long, for the very strategic position of Khandesh on the trade routes turned into the basis both for the ruin of Khandesh on the trade routes turned into the basis both for the ruin of Khandesh's prosperity and the oppression of the local peasantry—including the hitherto isolated Adivasis.⁶ Internecine wars between the Moghuls and Marathas and then amongst the latter feudatories had two principal effects on the local peasantry. The non-Adivasi peasantry both in the wake of, and anticipating, attacks on their property, emigrated from the area, relieved of not merely loss to life, but the whole gamut of vexatious taxes imposed on them, consequent to the 'farming' system practised by the Marathas. The Adivasi peasantry having no other 'homeland' to flee to, turned

'marauders'. In the general collapse of administration, caught in the crossfire of the inter-feudatory wars, the tribals took to the hills and a form of social banditry that was to spill over two decades of early British rule.

In Thana district the pre-British situation of the tribals was quite different. The region contained both hilly and plain areas but it was the latter that drew the attention of pre-British powers from the Moghuls to the Portuguese and the Marathas. Travellers in the talukas of Bassein, Salsette and Kalyan at varying points of time remarked on the fluctuating prosperity of the local peasantry—all non-tribals—the flourishing trade and the luxury of the landed gentry.⁷ But the hilly talukas of Dahanu, Umbergaon parts of Mahim, Wada and almost the whole of Mokhada, densely populated by tribals, drew scant notice—not in the least because of their inaccessibility and their relatively low economic importance. Under such conditions the tribals in these areas constituting between 61.1 percent of total population in Dahanu to 26.8 per cent in Murbad in 1890,⁸ were isolated to a far greater degree from 'mainstream' society than their Khandesh counterparts. The denseness of hills, forests secured the tribals a near total inaccessibility and discouraged the advance of any trade routes through the areas. Cut off from society the tribals in these regions, the principal ones being the Katkari, the Varli and Dhodia, lived in conditions of natural economy—producing coarse grain through shifting cultivation just enough for family reproduction, and supplementing their diet with fruits gathered from the forests.⁹

The differences in conditions of tribal existence and the differing of communication with the mainstream economy shaped the tribals' responses to the land settlements that the British introduced in both the areas; and in turn prejudiced both official response to their productive capacity (as labourers or producers) and the modes of exploitation by the landed gentry. But such responses were the immediate consequence of the nature of the colonial economy, to which we may now turn our attention.

II

THE BRITISH PERIOD

On assuming political power in Western India after their defeat of the Marathas in 1818, the British were beset by two principal problems in both districts. One was to account for the multifarious taxes and revenues (as well as modes of land assessment) that had been levied by various feudatories at varying points, accumulating like a palimpsest on the peasantry; the second was to settle the singularly largest element of the local population that fell outside the pole of any regular system of revenue assessment—the tribals.

The problems in Khandesh were compounded by the intensity of disorder and lawlessness that the British inherited. The internecine warfare had ravaged the countryside leaving behind only memories of former prosperity.¹⁰ The tribals i.e. the Bhils were the most ferocious of the "bandits". Thus the problem of settling the tribals on land in Khandesh assumed politico-military forms along with the economic. The first two decades of British rule in Khandesh witnessed a considerable deployment of arms and men to subdue the Bhils; together with policies of economic concession designed to win favour. It was only when a part of the tribal population was drafted into service under the banner of the Bhil Corps, created to fight and subdue Bhil "gangs" or "marauders" that the British were able, in some measure, to pacify the "restive" populace. By 1828, the Collector could report on the relative peace and quiet in the area "for the first time in twenty years".¹¹ The simultaneous problem of restoring the economy of Khandesh took longer. The initial policy of maintaining some of the earlier structure of assessments but at a lower level did not pay dividends. Tillage did not improve with the thirty per cent reduction in rates. In 1852 when Captain Wingate undertook the first systematic survey of lands in the area he found that only 14 per cent of the estimated arable land was under tillage. About 25 per cent of the villages stood completely deserted.¹²

In Thana district the British spent the first four decades gathering information on the nature of assessment which tended to differ, often from one taluka to another;¹³ and attempted a revival of agricultural production to a level sufficiently profitable for the raiyat to pay his revenue charge (many of which had been reduced in 1836-40), and maintain his level of expenditure/investment.¹⁴

For the British, the tribals constituted the dark and ignoble savages inhabiting a territory which was inaccessible¹⁵, but which held the promise of future colonization and potential revenue. But the districtwise reduction of extant revenue charges did not affect the tribal areas, and the lack of hegemony over such a large portion of the district, inhabited by tribals who almost "belonged to another country"¹⁶ was the subject of official correspondence in the first four decades of British rule.

By 1852 both Khandesh and Thana were subject to survey operations under the supervision of Captain Wingate and his lieutenant, Captain Francis.

In Thana district it took twelve years for the survey and classification of lands to be completed. By 1865 the remoter areas of Dahanu, Mokhada, Wada and Mahim had been surveyed and plots earmarked for tribal settlement. Necessarily, the survey rules for the presidency, adumbrated in the Joint Report of 1848¹⁷ for the classification and allotment of lands had to be modified in a district where half the population lived off shifting cultivation and areas were hitherto unassessed or classified. The tribals were

allotted *varkas* (uplands growing grain) plots and accounting for their "half-degraded" condition were assigned very low rates of revenue¹⁸ But the problem lay in the fact that theoretical systems of classification even with modifications, did not accord with the geography of the hill districts. It was very difficult to demarcate *varkas* lands from forests land or *rab* lands i.e. communal lands lying on the fringes of forests used for manure making or cattle grazing. To the extent that forests were not strictly demarcated it was difficult to settle the tribals, and in the first ten years after the Original Survey of the 1850s, Collectors and their Assistants were hard put to convince the tribals to settle down to sedentary agriculture on demarcated lands¹⁹

In Khandesh the phenomenon was similar, but for entirely different reasons. By the 1850s survey operations had commenced and at least as far as the fertile Tapi basin was concerned, the lands classified. The administrative control and attendant peace coupled with the new land assessments had attracted a large number of migrant peasantry, especially the Gujar cultivators from the Gujarat and Marwar areas. Concerned with quick colonisation and a rapid increase in agricultural production, especially of *cotton*, Gujar peasant cultivators were encouraged by the low rates of revenue and a stable administration to colonise more lands than could be tilled with family labour. The trickling stream of migration before the 1850s had broadened into a torrent by 1864—the height of the cotton boom in Bombay Presidency, consequent on the American Civil War—and was reflected in the rapid increase of tillage, from a bare 7 to 9 per cent in 1852 to 72 per cent in Nandurbar, 60 per cent in Shahade and 78 per cent in Talode talukas by 1878²⁰

The policy of settling the tribals i.e. Bhils—had resulted in their colonisation of lands north of the Tapi basin, and while the fertile plains along the Tapi river were being converted into fertile cotton lands, the area settled by Adivasis still gave the appearance of an "uninhabited forest". In fact these lands were *not* forests in the real sense of the word, but fertile arable lands overgrown with bushes and trees; and the Bhils, content to live off the land had not acquired the propensity nor the capital of the Gujar kulak to convert the land into an exchangeable commodity.

Increasing commercialisation of crops—wheat, cotton, sugarcane,—led to the expansion of the land market, with the Gujar in the lead, and an attendant problem arose creating the basis for the initial subsumption of the Bhils by the landed gentry. This was connected with a "shortage of labour," consequent on the overcoming of the problem of scarcity of tillage. Supported by colonial laws of contract and their own ignorance, the tribals provided the material basis for meeting this labour shortage, through a combination of cunning usury and pure fraud on the part of the Gujar kulak. In other words, unlike in Thana where the premise for

tribal settlement on lands was partly undercut by the conditions of the hill areas, in Khandesh the possibilities for tribal settlement were vitiated by the needs of the labour market—into which the tribals were manipulated²¹

Apart from kulak cunning and colonial laws, the enclosure of forests consequent to the implementation by the Bombay Government of the Indian Forest Act, hastened the process of tribal subsumption in both areas—in directions that pre-dated the Act. The provisions of the Act declared a major portion of the forests both in Thana and Khandesh as Reserved or Protected and rendered any usage of its produce or cultivation of the demarcated areas, cognizable offences²²

The effect of the enclosure of forests in the two areas of Thana and Khandesh was to further disposses the tribal population of an alternate means of sustenance²³ and drive them into the conditions of sedentary agriculture and the emergent land relations. In Khandesh the movement of the tribals wiped off the shortage of labour. Although the movement was protracted, by 1917 the percentage of share croppers and labourers (farm servants and field labourers) was 35.2 per cent and 39.7 per cent respectively. The corresponding figures in 1898 had been 2.3 per cent and 12.6 per cent for the two categories.²⁴ In Thana district the dual process of land rights and forest enclosures which should have, theoretically, made the tribal a settled peasant, in fact, turned him into a tenant. And if the predominance of labour service for the kulak marked the 'site' of the Bhil in Khandesh, it was as a tenant to the dominant moneylender/landlord combine that the Varli tribal in Thana district became situated. Thus, between 1916-17 and 1946-47, tenancy amongst the Varlis in the three talukas of Dahanu, Umbergaon, and Mahim had increased by 199 per cent, while in other areas not so densely populated with tribals it increased by 43 per cent in the same period.²⁵

Such differences in the 'positions' of the tribals in the property relations had their basis in the crop pattern of the two areas. In Khandesh the commercialisation of cotton and wheat called for the concentration of lands and the availability of cheap labour. All the more so, since consequent to the "Cotton Famine" faced by Lancashire, the Bombay Government was experimenting with long staple cotton offering incentives to cotton growers for the use of American seeds.²⁶ In Thana the commercial imperative influenced landlords/moneylenders who had subsumed the Varlis in a vicious debt cycle to convert their lands growing varkas crops like *jowari* millets into 'producing' grass which required little or no capital but yielded lucrative returns in the markets of Bombay. In 1896 the Revisian Survey officials remarked on the flourishing grass trade and its growth, especially in Mahim and Dahanu talukas on both sides of the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway line.²⁷ The fact that this "prosperity" was predicated on the "regrettable feature" of an "increase in indebtedness and transfer of lands from the cultivating to the money-

lending classes, especially so amongst the Varlis, did not escape the attention of officials busy calculating the enhancement of revenue rates²⁸

The differential 'positions' occupied by the tribals in the two areas were however realised through a common agency—indebtedness,²⁹ and reproduced themselves through the singular use or threat of, force or extra-economic coercion. In Thana if the predominance of violence,³⁰ in Khandesh, the labour force was reproduced through mortgage in labour that in effect amounted to slavery³¹.

In effect the subsumption of the tribals in Thana and Khandesh was operationalised through a singular agency—usury—capital, aided and abetted by colonial laws of contract. But the positions of the tribals differed. In Thana the Varlis and Katakari—the former accounting for nearly 50 per cent of the total tribal population—were by and large transformed into tenants, whereas the Bhils of Khandesh were to a large extent reduced to slave labour. While some discerning British officials were perceptive enough to recognise the fact that the basis for this subsumption lay in the nature of their laws and the markets created by commercialisation,³² it is significant that the reasons for the readily accepted fact of tribal exploitation were located in the tribals themselves. In Thana, the Varlis plight was explained in terms of their laziness, slothfulness, propensity to drink and incapacity for hard work³³. Such "characteristics" first listed as 'observations'³⁴ gradually acquired a heuristic value as officials were hard put to explain the apparent contradiction of increasing prosperity (measured in terms of resale value of land as multiples of revenue assessment)—and the increasing pauperisation of the tribals.³⁵ Not surprisingly such legitimisations of tribals' exploitation passed off as the generally accepted *perspective* with which the tribals were viewed³⁶. It would finally take the organised movements of the Varlis under Godavari Parulekar from 1946 onwards and the struggles of the Bhils in Khandesh from the 1970s onwards to overthrow this epistemological albatross.³⁷

1 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol XII* (Hereafter referred to as GBP-XII), p 248, *Gazetteer of the territories under the Government of East India Company, Vol I*, Thornton, E, London, 1854 (Hereafter referred to as EICG-1) pp 258-59.

2 *EICG-I*, *op cit*, pp 525-59

3 *GBP-XII*, *op. cit*, p 82.

4 *GBP-XII*, *ibid*, p 248

5 *ibid*, pp 214, 250

6 *ibid*, pp 268-272

7 A. Kyd Nauhe 'The Konkan 'A Historical Sketch', *Bombay 1875*, p 98, *GBP-XIII (Thana District)*, p 3, 550 Bishop R Heber "Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay. 1824-25" *Vol III*, 4th Edition 1844 pp 88-9, 86

8. *Revenue Department (Volume) 1890 Vol No 102*. (Hereafter referred to as *RD Year/Vol No*) p 312

9. *GBP-XIII*, *op. cit*, pp 47, 283

10. *Gazeteer of the Maharashtra State-Dhule District (GMSD)* (Revised Edition), Bombay, 1974 p 140
11. *ibid*, p 154.
12. *GBP-XII, op cit*, p 273
13. *M S. Sel 160* (Collector's Correspondence) pp 1-17
14. *R D 1838 7/867* pp 204-7, 289-96 Also *Kyd Nairne, op cit*, p 123.
15. *R D 1824 5/89* pp 12-13
16. *R D. 1836/13* p 192.
17. *Joint Report of 1847* Reprinted by the Government of Maharashtra, Land Records Department, Bombay, 1975 passim.
18. *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government (New Series)* Papers relating to Revised Rates of Assessment for thirteen different talookas of the Thanna Collectorate, No XCVI Bombay, 1966 (Hereafter referred as SBG-VOL p 13)
19. *R D 1872/5*, p 546
20. *SBG-Shahada taluks*, p 11 Also *GBP-XII op cit*, pp 330, 490, 417
21. *Report of the Deccan Riots Commission, Appendix B 1876* (Hereafter referred as DRC-Appendix B) pp 164-esp pp 164-84 Cf *GBP-XII op cit*, pp 197-200 Also *R D- 1844/107*, p 252
22. *Government of India, Act VII of 1878*, pp 17-25
23. *R D 1890/16*, pp 78-82
24. *Sulabha Brahme and A Upadhyaya*, 'Study of Economic Conditions of Agricultural Labour in Dhulia District, Maharashtra' Poona 1975 (*Typed Report*) p 35.
25. *M V Hate* 'Farm Ownership and Tenancy (with Particular Reference to the Effects of Tenancy in Thana District)' *University of Bombay, 1949* (Unpublished Ph. D thesis), p 151
26. *D Tripathi* 'The opportunism of Free Trade Lancashire Cotton Famine and Indian Cotton Cultivation', *Indian Economic and Social History Review Vol IV 3 Sept. 1967*. passim Cf *P Harnetty*, 'Imperialism and Free Trade Lancashire and India in the mid-19th Century' *Vanconver*, 1972 passim
27. *SBG-CCCXCVIII*, p 9 Cf Opinion of British Officials thirty years before, on the inferior quality of grass in the Thana taluka *R D 1864/136*, p. 14
28. *SBG CCCXCVIII*, p. 125, 138. Also Cf *SBG CCXCIII* passim, The Collector's correspondence on Vaili land transfers in Dahanu taluka *R D 1898/107*, pp. 16-25 & 28-37
29. For Thana see *R D 1903/23*, pp 55-6 for a graphic description of usurious mechanisms *K.J Save* 'The Warlis' *Padma Publications, Bombay, 1945*, p. 135 for indebtedness in the 1930's For Khandesh see *op cit*, *GBP-XII* pp 197-8
30. *R D 1901/57*, p 14, also *D M Eymbatton op cit*, pp 170, 164-7, 172-3 Also *GBP-XII, op cit*, pp 197-99
32. J P Orr, (Collector of Thana 1896-1900) cited in *D Symington*, 1935, p. 47
33. *R D 1878/143*, p 443 also *R D 1865/26*, p 260
34. *J Wilson* "An Account of the Warlis and Kathodis-Two of the Forest Tribes of N Konkan" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol 7, 1843, London* passim
35. *R.D 1880/29*, p 116, Cf *R.D 1901/57*, p. 13
36. *K J Save, op cit*, p. 203 Cf *G Parulekar* who ironically expresses similar views. *G. Parulekar* 'Adivasi Revolt', National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1975, p 58
37. *Sulabha Brahme and A. Upadhyaya* "A Critical Analysis of the Social Formation and Peasant Resistance in Maharashtra 3 Vols See Vol VI, Pune 1979 (Unpublished).

Speculation in the Indian Economy

THE FINANCE MINISTER in his budget speech on February 28, 1986 announced that wholesale price indices had increased by only 3.4 percent between March 1985 and February 1986 as compared to 5.6 percent over a comparable period the previous year. Even assuming this figure to be an underestimate the rather unexpectedly low price increase comes in the wake of a whopping Rs 4400 crore budget deficit according to revised estimates. This has encouraged the government to go in for yet another round of deficit financing to the order of Rs 3800 crores according to budget estimates, a figure that is likely to be higher in actuality.

Even if one accounts for the record consecutive bumper harvests and the apparently improved industrial performance, such low increases in wholesale prices seem at first instance to defy economic logic and past experience in the Indian context. In order to fit the jigsaw puzzle, it will be necessary to look at the role of speculation in the Indian economy.

Traditionally, speculation in the Indian context has essentially implied speculation in commodities. The most apparent form of this speculation manifested itself in the past through the disappearance from shop shelves of the more expensive brands of cigarettes, a few days before the budget and their reappearance at higher prices after the budget. Similarly, petrol pumps would run 'dry' before the budget and would magically be 'restocked' after the budget.

These essentially are rather simple speculative activities designed to take extra profits from the price differentials between the pre-budget and the post-budget prices. A more generalised form of speculation in the Indian economy has been in essential commodities like foodgrains, pulses, edible oils, sugar, kerosene etc which are items of everyday mass consumption and which, therefore, face an inelastic demand. Taking the case of foodgrains, the wholesale purchases would be made in the post-harvest period when prices are at the lowest and would gradually be released in the market when the prices are higher.

The recent increases in foodgrains output have acted as a depressor for speculative activity. This is because speculation becomes highly profitable in a situation of scarcity, relative to demand. Nullifying this depressor to a certain extent is the constant upward revision of procure-

ment prices for agricultural products by the government. While these act as only a floor price the actual market prices are even higher. Thus, if stocks are held over a year, in addition to the normal trade margin, extra profits could be gleaned by the simple fact that the floor-price itself has gone upwards. Speculation in agricultural commodities, though profitable, need not yield the rate of return which speculative capital is on the look-out for, i.e., a rate of return substantially above the rate of interest in the money market. This is also due to the unpredictable direction of government policy. Take the case of the recent spurt in sugar and edible oil prices. The price rise was so rapid and accelerating that, under severe pressure, the government, instead of trying to unearth hoarded stocks and release them in the market, decided to import the same and flood the market. This resulted in prices crashing and not only did the speculators lose money but so also did the primary producers. Hence, speculative capital has been for some time, on the look-out for more lucrative areas. This brings us to the question of the stock market.

The history of the stock market is one of swings with long periods of depressed conditions. In the 1950s, there was some activity, but by the early 1960s, this activity was tapering off and remained in that condition for more than a decade. In the early 1980s, there was some revival of stock market activity but not to such an extent as to be termed impressive. In 1981-82, there was a 400 per cent jump in the stock absorption for new issues (see table I) while the number of companies entering the stock market to raise capital doubled. This pace has been maintained with minor swings. The feverish pace had reached a peak in 1985-86 with share prices reaching an all-time high, more so in some selected scrips. In addition, debenture issues, both convertible and non-convertible, were offered to the public at all-time high interest rates. Unconfirmed estimates place the total stock absorption at over Rs 2000 crores. Compare this with an average of Rs 117 crores between 1971 and 1976.

The reason for this sudden increase in stock market activity is obvious. Ever since the Congress-I government came back to power, there has been a gradual process of providing greater incentives and subsidies for the corporate sector in order to help it grow. This was quite in line with the government's overall policy of import liberalisation, the pursuit of a luxury consumption-led growth strategy, and so on. All these measures led to expectations of larger profits and faster capital appreciation in the corporate sector. The high-point came with the Rajiv Gandhi government's budget of 1985-86 and the pre-budget policy formulations. The private corporate sector became the beneficiary of hitherto undreamt-of concessions and liberalisation. This brought forth even higher expectations, not only for the immediate period but for the longer period also, of further incentives and concessions. The bulls in the stock market never had it so good.

Speculative capital, thus, moved *en masse* into the stock market. Not

only were new issues grabbed into, even existing stocks of "blue-chip" companies recorded unprecedented advances. Table II gives an indication of the degree of increases in share value of selected scrips. The share price index (*Financial Express Equity Index*), taking 1979=100 as the base, had reached 300 points by 1985 end. This indicates an average return of nearly 60 per cent per annum in the past five years, an astronomical figure if just the last year was considered, even if we choose to ignore the dividends in the interim period.

While it is true that the corporate sector has been presented a much larger chunk of the cake from the 1985-86 budget than ever before, yet some of the share price increases are not commensurate with the actual potential growth of the company in question. Stock exchange circles would admit that the large unexpected price increases are quite unhealthy, for it reveals excessive speculative conditions in the stocks concerned. Further, most new issues in the market have been oversubscribed, on an average over three times the amount offered. All these amount to diversion of speculative funds from commodities to shares. The reason for this unprecedented activity is that while the government has formulated policies which have fuelled profit expectations, exaggerated price increases have been stimulated by speculative activity. The difference between the relatively undeveloped capital market in India and those of the west is that, in the latter case, share prices correspond quite closely with the performance of the company, while in the former, the price movements are marginally affected by the actual performance of the corporate sector in general and the company in particular. In India, speculation feeds upon speculation and expectations of further increases or decreases in share prices spur on speculative activity. This comparison becomes apparent when the rapidity of price changes between the two are compared.

The 'quick-buckers' and the 'equity quacks' have flooded the capital market. A large number of middle class investors are also in the stock market for profit-taking. If they are to remain there and not move their speculative capital elsewhere, it is necessary for the government to continually offer further incentives and concessions to the corporate sector. This it obviously cannot do, given the resources constraint impinging on the government and the consequent fiscal crisis. Another reason why the stock market "boom" cannot persist is that the middle classes who are now investing in a major way in the stock market, are likely to withdraw hastily from the market once an initial panic sets in the stock market. This has happened in the immediate post-budget period in 1986-87 when prices of hard-selling scrips crashed. This is because, traditionally these classes of investors have been risk-shy. They are, therefore, likely to opt for the attractive and safe bond issues of government undertakings like NTPC, ITI, REC, etc., and other similar forthcoming issues. It is quite likely that the government would go in for this form of financing its capi-

TABLE I

PATTERN OF ABSORPTION OF PRIVATE CAPITAL Issues (in Rs lakhs)

	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
No of Companies	83	69	80	80	96	121	244	353
Amount Issued (1+2)	6408	3430	7171	5787	6224	9838	42163	35660
1 Subscribed	769	575	1456	1137	1389	2427	11965	15122
1) Promoters etc.	579	440	1032	941	1068	2211	10339	14211
2) Govt, Fin Inst, LIC etc.	190	135	424	196	321	216	7626	911
2. Offered to Public	5639	2855	5715	4650	4836	7410	30198	20538
(i) Subscribed by Pub. other than under-writers	2856	1549	3077	3477	3989	6559	26093	15653
(ii) Underwriters	2783	1265	2499	1170	835	833	4104	4418
(iii) Unsubscribed	—	42	139	4	11	19	1	467
3 Amount underwritten	5475	2520	5290	3358	3761	4212	26138	16270

Source : Reserve Bank of India. Monthly Bulletins, Various issues

TABLE II

<i>Movement of share prices (Selected Companies)</i>				
	(i) Pre-Budget 1985	(ii) Pre-Budget 1986	[(ii)-(i)] × 100	
1 Blow Plast	36 50	120 00	328 8	
2 Blue Star	33 00	90 00	272 7	
3. Dunlop India	22.30	68.00	304 9	
4. Food Specialities	86 00	252 50	293 6	
5. GSFC	537 00	1505.00	280 3	
6. Hindustan Lever	51 25	146 00	284 9	
7. Hindustan Motors	37 50	129.50	345 3	
8. Indrol	90.50	375 00	414.4	
9. Lakme	74 00	187.50	253.4	
10. Larsen & Toubro	72.00	190.00	263.9	
11. NOCIL	240 00	622.50	288.5	
12. Reliance Industries	120 00	326 00	271 7	
13. SPIC	43 50	161.00	370 1	
14 Tata Steel	381.00	1360 00	357.0	
15 Zenith Steel	28 03	79.00	282.1	

Source Various issues of *Financial Express*, Bombay. Already existing companies

tal expenditure in the future also in the light of the recommendations of the *Sukhamoy Chakravarti Committee to Review the Working of the Monetary System*. Thus, the withdrawal of a substantial amount of funds from the stock market will depress the optimism in those markets. Therefore, with a reasonable degree of certainty, we can assume that speculative capital will be re-channelised, once the scope for super profits in stock speculation diminishes, into traditional spheres, i.e. essential commodities. Once that happens, the government can no longer be smug about low rates of whole-sale price increases or price stability in general

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Ruling Party's Defence of Muslim Women's Bill

THE TAME petering out of the campaign against the Muslim (Divorced) Women's Maintenance Bill 1986 is best seen in the absence of critical response to the Congress party's submissions during the debate in the parliament. Barring Seema Mustafa who wrote in the *Telegraph* on the presentation of K. C. Pant, Union Minister for Steel and Mines, none of the newspaper editors or other commentators thought it fit to examine and scrutinise the nature of the submissions of the Congress party. And yet a critique of the ruling party's defence of and reasoning behind the Bill is necessary, not only because the Bill would have a debilitating effect on the Muslim community but also because it is a less disadvantageous way to ensure a communal chasm which can enable the legitimisation of the pandering of the articulate sections of the Hindu community. The debate in parliament therefore, sheds light on the ruling party's attitude and approach, and helps identify the evolving contours of the ruling party's political ideology.

When the Bill was presented before the Lok Sabha on February 27 the Prime Minister defended it on the ground that Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code was "not giving adequate protection to women", and that the then proposed Bill gave the Muslim women much more than was available under sections 125 and 127 of Cr P C. He contended that the Supreme Court judgement had posed "certain" uncertainties in the mind of "certain" Muslims. He added that it was not for the government to examine whether these were "concrete" or not, as it was enough to know that "minorities were afraid that their rights were being diluted". By the time it was debated in the parliament, in May last, the emphasis had shifted almost exclusively to stressing that the Bill was brought in deference to the wishes of the Muslim community. The Union Minister for Law, A K. Sen, in his intervention in the debate on May 5 stated that "the accusation is that the Government is surrendering to communalism and fundamentalism" and wondered: is it surrendering to fundamentalism or communalism, if every time we listen to the just demands of the minority if you heed to their sensitiveness about the protection of their personal laws"? When a member of parliament reminded the Minister that "their (minority community's) legitimate demand is education, health" he was

neither allowed to complete his sentence nor was there any response to his intervention. The reason was simple. Behind the pretence of being sensitive the ruling party was camouflaging its policy of in fact disabling the minorities. In an case the deprivation of the Muslim community is all too clear to need elucidation.

There were several other occasions when the claim of ruling party members of being sensitive to minorities was challenged. During the course of his excruciatingly long submission the Law Minister stressed that it is "relevant for me to point out that no government worth its salt can remain deaf to the demands of the minority community". When MPs asked "What happened in Barabanki?" or "What happened in Moradabad?" they were reprimanded by the Speaker. Not surprisingly, since the Law Minister would have been at a loss to explain these away. During the debate in the Rajya Sabha the same Minister contended that "Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru repeatedly said that the personal laws of the Muslims would be changed only with their consent. And if the Muslims want it tomorrow, they will have it tomorrow". When a member asked, "Have you taken the opinion of all the Muslim people?" before proposing the Bill, she was curtly ignored. When the same member asked "If one section of the Hindu community wants revival of 'sati', will the Minister consider that also?", the Minister, with insidious humour, responded. "Sir, it reminds me of that fable in Sanskrit, one king said, 'I shall give away my daughter to anyone who can defeat me in debate'. The wife of the king was very much grieved and she asked 'What have you done? Are you going to barter away your daughter? If tomorrow anybody defeats you in debate will he take away our daughter?' He said 'My dear wife, why are you getting worried? *It is for me to judge whether I have been defeated or not*" (sic!) The implication was different from what was intended. It meant, as the Prime Minister had earlier opined, that it is for the government to decide what is or is not the majority opinion in each case. And presumably what "concession" is to be made and when, is the exclusive prerogative too of the government.

Had the reasoning in favour of the Bill ended on this note their submissions could have been less significant. However, the contrary was the case. And the ruling party's intervention turned ominous. The Union Minister of Commerce, Shiv Shankar, one of the four ministers who presented the ruling party's submissions to the parliament, in his speech to the Rajya Sabha on May 8, introduced the line of argument that was perfected by K.C. Pant. Shiv Shankar argued that "these are the matters where you cannot judge these issues on the anvil of total logic and reasons. These are matters of faith and that is why one has to keep the background of the shariat law, the Muslim law for the purpose of a proper understanding of the whole issue." In times better than ours such statements would have been considered unexceptionable. Such not being the case what was implied was that the Muslims could not be expected to look dispassionately on

such issues, and the reason for bringing forward such a Bill was therefore to pacify an agitated community. He implicitly characterised the Muslim community as being unreasonable and drew attention to the contrast between the two communities by saying: "I gave the example of various personal laws with reference to the Hindu Code Bill . . . that at that time the Hindu community was prepared to accept that law. Whatever we might say here, outside the situation is that (Muslim) people are not prepared to accept this"

Reference to "law" here being a euphemism for reform, the Minister's remarks are a not-so-subtle reminder that compared to the Hindu community which had "willingly" accepted reform, the Muslim community remains caught in the web of illogical and unreasonable faith. When a member challenged, "Has there been a consensus of the Muslim community on this Bill?" there was expectedly no response. The Prime Minister in any case had made it clear that it was not necessary to establish whether there is a consensus, and the Law Minister had amplified this line of thinking through his fable.

But compared to the rest the most parochial submission from the government side was made by K. C. Pant in the Lok Sabha that surpassed others for its ill-disguised pursuit of a line of thinking based on the theme of superiority of Hindus which implicitly describes Muslims as a backward-looking community. K. C. Pant argued, "We cannot depend only on the law for reforms. The society has to be ready for reform. The well-springs of that reform have to come from within and then the law and the sentiments that have been aroused by a certain movement, they coincide and then the society moves forward." The real meaning of this statement becomes clear when juxtaposed with something K. C. Pant said later in his speech. "And if today debate is taking place within the Muslim community about this Bill, about its desirability, about its contents, about the need for the Muslim community *to do some rethinking*, I would consider it a very healthy sign." And so that there would be no mistake he added, "In the Hindu society *this process has been going on for decades*. It had begun a hundred years ago. As a result of that and the efforts of so many tall leaders of this country *the Hindu society has been able to regenerate itself*." The suggestion is so clear that it hardly needs any elaboration. Unlike the Hindus who have reformed themselves as a result of a reform movement begun a hundred years ago, the Muslims remain where they were. Apart from the fact that the Hindu Code Bill discriminates against women on inheritance, over the years many of its other provisions have been diluted. While a recent judgement of the Supreme Court compels a woman to cohabit with her husband or face automatic divorce, by an amendment in 1976 to the Special Marriage Act, Hindus marrying under this Act will not be governed by the Indian Succession Act but by the Hindu Succession Act!

But reason cannot penetrate the fog of obscurantism. And through

an inexplicable permutation of logic we are first told that the Bill is good for Muslim women. And of course the Muslim community wants it. This the government knows but how they arrived at such a conclusion is a not for the public to know. And therefore government instead of giving the process of reform a push chooses to put a brake on it. All in the name of secularism. Why? Claims of superiority of the Hindu community based on the Hindu Code Bill of 1956, whether on the matter of marriage or divorce or inheritance are of course highly debatable. But why make blatantly false, historically inaccurate, and sectarian statements? Was this a feeler to the articulate section of the Hindu community? A suggestion too that the Bill was in the best interest of the Hindu community? Is it therefore that K C Pant made the following remark "Is it worth the game just for the sake of pressing a political point of view, to risk arousing passions in this country at a time when we need the unity and solidarity of every community in this country?" Does this not mean that were it not for such a Bill the prospects of getting the support of the Muslims for defending the unity and integrity of the country would be jeopardised? In other words the Muslim community's commitment to the country is incumbent on the concessions made to them at this sensitive juncture in the country's history. And any opposition to such concessions meant that the opponents were playing with fire and provoking the Muslim community.

What image, what impression do all these arguments leave behind? What excites passions, and revives distorted atavistic memories? Is it not the image of a recalcitrant minority bent on keeping itself different, aggressively demanding concessions even when it is being pampered, eroding from within the process of consolidation of a Pan-Indian identity? I would argue that this is not far fetched if placed in a broader perspective: the need to fill the ideological vacuum for the ruling party, the party's efforts under Indira Gandhi to make symbolic and substantial gestures towards articulate sections of Hindus, the need to cover selling of the country to the imperialists through the hyperbole of reviving religio-cultural heritage; the not so subtle feelers to leaders of fanatic Hindu militant groups, the latest being a meeting on July 16 called by the Prime Minister with leaders of "Dharma Raksha Samiti" including Jagatguru Sankaracharya of Dwarakapith, working president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, general secretary of Sanatana Dharma Pradinidhi Sabha the etc (This meeting was the lead news for full three minutes on the 8.40 p.m. TV news). Surely these are not isolated, sporadic or incidental.

GAUTAM NOVLAHA

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Book Review

C.R. Das, Gandhi and the Working Class

RAKHAHARI CHATTERJI, *Working Class and the Nationalist Movement in India, The Critical Years*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi 1984, 215 pp., Rs. 80 00.

A NEW PHASE in the Indian nationalist movement started after the first world war when, for a number of reasons, the masses were turned to for either tactical or strategic support. The integration of mass politics into the new approach of the INC, which till then, except for the 1905 eruption, had been dominated by the petitional activities of the urban professionals and the big business class, was not devoid of danger. It entailed the risk of the downtrodden people transgressing the rather limited aims of the Congress leadership.

As a matter of fact, the British government and its colonial administration were seriously perturbed by such a prospect. The real or fictitious activities of foreign-inspired revolutionaries, who were supposed to attempt to integrate the working class in the nationalist movement, were the focus of attention of the intelligence services and were the subject of a number of conspiracy cases.

The apprehension was not unwarranted, although most of those the intelligence services described as communists were not. Till the mid-twenties, there were practically no communists in India, despite the relatively early start of industrialization. One therefore has a basic reservation on the sub-title of Rakhahari Chatterji's book in which he defines the early 1920s as the critical years in which the future INC attitude towards the working class is supposed to have been formed.

The period, significant though it was, did in this respect probably not have a decisive and conclusive character. The author has started from the assumption that the two opposite and exclusive views on nationalism and the working class were represented by Chittaranjan Das and Mahatma Gandhi. Since the former passed away in the mid-twenties, the ensuing period up to independence is discarded in the course of a few pages.

The contention is that the national leadership only towards the fag end of the independence movement, through the then founded INTUC, attempted to bridge the hiatus between the INC and the working class. The rejection of the approach of C. R. Das in the early twenties in favour of the Gandhian policy of indifference, is seen as the start of a generic

development whereby political power ultimately moved into the hands of the brown sahibs (echoing the famous statement of Chittaranjan Das).

One could question the location of the critical years in the early twenties with references to the at least as critical years at the time of the civil disobedience movement, the formation of the state governments and the Quit India movement. In the later periods, a by far more vociferous clash of opinions took place in the INC. Moreover, the working class had emerged as an independent force led either by INC loyalists, although not by the party, or by the various shades of communists and socialists.

One in fact could argue that both in respect of the agrarian issue and in respect of the capital-labour relations, the confrontation between the nationalism of the oppressed classes and the elite based nationalism was a continuous phenomenon and that the INC, instead of clearing the field, established and generally maintained its hegemonic position over the working classes. Chatterji thinks otherwise. "The INC remained an onlooker to all this" (p 178).

Nationalist politics in an era of mass mobilization, as in the early twenties, throws up two basic features. In the first place, the understanding emerged that any movement against the colonial political domination, in order to possess an effective bargaining power, should automatically involve workers and peasants. In the second place, it simultaneously emerged that with the potential growth of industrial working class consciousness and organization, the all-in unity of a bourgeois-dominated mass movement would come under severe strain.

As most authors of a by now considerable number of books on the history of the trade union movement, Chatterji also opens with a survey of the growth of the working class, the early labour movement and the legislative process. The treatment, on the basis of secondary literature and reports, benefits from an attractive style and from a logical structuring, but in length is unbalanced with the latter one third of the book which deals with the actual subject matter of nationalism and the working class.

Although most of the material is interesting, it is not really germane to the question under discussion. When it is, for example the chapter on the character of the working class, no conclusions are inferred which may be useful in properly assessing the respective roles of Das and Gandhi.

In the debate on the class character of industrial labour, two opposite positions have been occupied. On the one hand, taking the lead from Whitley's Royal Commission on Labour in 1929, range the scholars who focus on the village connection resulting in a peasant-cum-worker attitude. Others have stressed the urban anchorage, but at the same time have argued that the emerging working class was in fact to an extent still embedded in traditional hierarchical structures. The worker was often an indentured free labourer, a term coined by Lalita Chakravarty.

Chatterji disagrees with both approaches. He sees in the early

working class the combination of three different rural strata, namely footloose rural proletariat, ruined craftsmen and low castes. In his view, they moved freely to the industrial centres in search of new economic opportunities. In the cities, "the workers found a hitherto unknown freedom from caste disabilities rampant in the narrow confines of village life" (p. 33).

In the villages, they left behind only "a hut and a hearth", which retained a usefulness only in view of the severe lack of accommodation in the mill areas. From the free flow of rural push-outs, who not only shook off their material links but their immaterial links as well, was born a working class which is supposed to have smoothly acquired an urban industrial identity. The possibility of the perseverance of semi-feudal methods of recruitment and working arrangements is ignored. The role of labour lords who went looking for cheap, docile, dependent and ethnically diffuse male workers in specific catchment areas, is passed by with the argument that distant sourcing in itself does not stand the test of scrutiny.

The picture which Chatterji draws has serious flaws, empirically and theoretically. It obliterates the ambivalent position of the industrial workers as a class. A number of factors hampered the articulation of a clear class character. Vertical systems of patronage on the basis of economic as well as primordial attachments could bring the lowest and least organised workers ultimately under the political hegemony of the top national leaders. It is at this point that the relevance of such nationalist leaders as Gandhi and Das emerges. Professional politicians from within the aristocratic milieu could, on the basis of an existing religio-cultural mainstream idiom, appeal to the various economic strata in their ideological hinterland. The religious obstinacy of the Mahatma was matched by the Vaishnavite orientation of the friend of labour, Chittaranjan: "When labour would range themselves against capital, the whole fabric of civilisation would collapse. Indian culture was one of synthesis which would include all sections and communities" (quote on p. 144). In this respect both leaders really belong to the traditional society. Das in fact was much closer to Gandhi than to the communists, as Chatterji contends.

Gandhi, as well as Das, is pigeon-holed as a radical militant labour politician who, unlike Das, had a "non-political" approach in the sense that he did not want to involve the workers in political movements. Whereas Gandhi, as requested by the Indian millowners at Ahmedabad and tacitly approved by the government, gave his blessings to the formation of an integrative trade union within the confines of one city, and refused to extend this type of organisation to other places, Das was busy amassing (vice-) presidentships of various unions. The supposed aim was to galvanise their strength for the national cause. Possibly this was also done for the cause of Das himself.

Chatterji would not entertain such a possibility of assessing his subject as an opportunist politician. As it stands, however, Das appears to have changed his ideas on the role of labour thrice in a rather short period of four years. In the middle of that period, at the INC Gaya Congress in 1922, he made his famous speech on swaraj for the masses. The address was as much directed against the rule of the middle class bureaucracy (which was not actually defined in terms of any ownership class), as against class struggle. His programme of mass mobilisation was propagated with the clear warning that if Congress would not organise the workers and peasants, they would get attracted by new organisations, dissociated from the cause of swaraj, which would bring the class struggle within the arena of the peaceful revolution.

Gandhi and Das in this respect had much more in common than Chatterji is prepared to accept. Would it not have been better to analyze the two leaders as the two sides of the coin in the INC dilemma of nationalist politics in the new era of emancipatory movements from below? The radical difference was that Gandhi realised that the organisation of workers as a militant guard in the nationalist movement, would set in motion uncontrollable processes which in the end might undermine and destroy the existing patterns of culture and industry. Also concerning the latter aspect, Gandhi and Das thought in unison. The wresting of power from selfish interests obviously did not include the industrial bourgeoisie, which actually had to be defended by the workers.

On this point, Chatterji is quite confused. The shifts in position are rationalised as a sign of the fact that Das was "a nation-builder, and his view of the Indian nation was that it had to be multi-class, multi-group and multi-interest nation" (p. 163). As long as he was in the INC, he was "a leftist-nationalist", who strengthened the left wing "just to maintain balance within Congress" (p. 176), and who envisaged an independent India "in which the organised labour and the peasantry share power equally with the middle classes" (p. 142).

The formation of the Swaraj Party by Das and Motilal Nehru in 1924 gives a clue, however, of where the real interests of Chittaranjan Das should be located. In the light of his class position and his cultural make-up, an interesting and detailed study could have been made on the manner which the nationalist politicians from the aristocratic circles tried to come to terms with the role and position of the working class in the nationalist movement in Eastern India. That study still remains to be done.

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July 1986

**USES AND LIMITS OF FOUCAULT • COLONIALISM
AND ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES • ORIENTAL PHANTOMS
• ORIENTALISM AND ARCHITECTURAL CULTURE**

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*Articles and review express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors
or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.*

Editorial Note

THE CURRENT number of *Social Scientist* is devoted to a discussion of Edward Said's work *Orientalism* and of themes thrown up by it. Many readers may ask - why devote a whole issue of the journal to a topic which is both esoteric, as well as, for most of us, fairly opaque? Our answer is that Said's work has a wider relevance than merely for the narrow circle of scholars interested in the theme of orientalism *per se*, not surprisingly, it has already generated a considerable amount of debate in several circles. Since we believe that one of our major tasks is to bring to our readers a whiff of contemporary debates on influential pieces of writing, devoting a whole issue of the journal to the debate around Said's book seems eminently worthwhile

The importance of Said's work is at two distinct levels. At one level it touches on crucial aspects of the relationship between imperialism and culture. It is a reinterpretation of the epistemological projections of nineteenth century Orientalist texts, in the course of which Said both unravels the systematic production of a "discourse" identified as Orientalism, and shows its links with the process of European imperialist subjugation of other societies. At another level, Said raises questions both wider and more general. His perception of "texts" as springing from a will-to-power, his emphasis that "discourse" is produced, that it is "at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures", his assertion that fields and disciplines emerge not as a "natural" phenomenon but as a result of selections, prohibitions and sanctions, his view of the interdependence between power and knowledge, and his endorsement of the "adversary" role of the intellectual "within his discipline and its institutional supports", are all indicative obviously of a general epistemological stance which is important in its own right and deserves serious attention.

The lead article by Rashmi Bhatnagar discusses the relationship between Said and Foucault. While Said's debt to Foucault is significant, is admitted by Said himself, and is most evident in his use of "Foucauldian" concepts like "discourse", it is the points of difference between the two which deserve particular notice. The contrast between Foucault's anti-humanism which goes with his exclusively theoretical activism, and Said's self-styled humanism and opting for an "interventionist critical practice" derives according to the paper from their respective historical positions,

Said, as a critic of colonialism, maintains for himself a "perceptual distance" from official discourses as well as from "family-quarrels of the Western philosophical tradition".

Sibet Bozdogan also notes this essential difference between Said and Foucault and underscores the point that the strength of Said's "adversary position" comes from his not counterposing a defensive, oppositional discourse against the Orientalist one : Said does *not* advance an authentic traditional Orient in opposition to the stereotype of the Orient produced in the Orientalist discourse. The author takes this as the point of departure for criticising some recent views on Islamic culture and architecture.

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's paper cuts through the Orientalist-Anglicist controversy to lay bare the commonness of their assumptions and intent. Both Orientalists and Anglicists, she argues, were concerned with administrative efficiency and involved in the imperial project. Their differences centred around methods rather than goals, the Orientalists' concern for Indian languages for instance derived not from any desire to perpetuate or promote these languages as such, but from a desire to use them for a better imparting of English "ideas". Both Orientalists and Anglicists were like-wise united in their contempt for the India they saw, the Orientalists however invoked a glorious past culture as a counterpoint to this contempt, while the Anglicists indulged in wholesale denigration. The introduction of English literature as a discipline for study into school and college curricula was part of an overall imperial project, in this overall project the Orientalists and Anglicists were collaborators. The author then raises the pertinent question : can the study of this discipline even today be seen as an "Orientalising enterprise" ?

The paper by Kalpana Sahni, provides an interesting complement to the other papers. While analysing the process by which Dostoevsky moved in the course of time towards an arch-nationalist and even imperialist position, and contrasting his attitude with that of Tolstoy, the paper shows that the Oriental Phantom was not domiciled in Western Europe alone, but haunted Russia as well.

What we have got together in this number is only a small offering, the complex question of Said's relationship with Marxism for instance is not covered anywhere. But we hope that the readers will find it useful, at least for acquainting them with a range of ideas.

RASHMI BHATNAGAR*

*Uses and Limits of Foucault : A Study of the Theme
of Origins in Edward Said's 'Orientalism'*

THE PUBLICATION of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 and its subsequent reception and influence is a phenomenon of considerable significance to those of us who are vitally engaged by the possibilities of a Third-World intervention in the field of theory. That Said's book emerges from a widespread debate is indicated by the common assumptions shared by others writing at the same time like Bryan S. Turner, *Marxism and the End of Orientalism* (1978), Anwar Abdel Malek, *Orientalism in Crisis* (1963) and J.P.S. Oberoi, *Science and Swaraj* (1978).¹ The last few years have seen the formation of a loosely-affiliated group (Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Edward Said among others) who have variously been extending the critique of colonialism and post-colonialism.

The critique arises from the intermingling of the concerns of the disciplines of history (particularly the school of subaltern-studies), sociology, Freudian psychoanalysis and literary criticism under the umbrella of what is now increasingly becoming known as Theories of Subject-Production. There is a new climate of speculation about the ways in which the colonized subject was and continues to be produced by cultural practices/historical documents, archives and literary texts. The complex processes by which the colonized people are awarded a self-image, their culture explained to them, the ways in which they are newly named and interpreted to themselves—this would seem to be what is meant by the (re)production of the colonized subject. The colonial subject has become central to theories of subject-production both for the continuing political value of colonial struggles, as also because colonialism marks, in Fanon's phrase, violence in its natural state.²

These speculations and investigations in what is becoming discernible as a field-in-the-making in Third World theory are to some extent influenced by Said's *Orientalism* even where they may take the form of a reaction against the absences discovered in the book. There is however one remarkable area of consensus between Said and other theorists in that they all adopt the methods of post-structuralism, although there may be differences in ideological positions, areas of address and even mutations in textual

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practices. The questions Said and his fellow-theorists deserve to be asked, concern the relationship, even the fit, between their thesis and their method. In the case of *Orientalism*, Said clearly states in his Introduction that his method derives from Gramsci, Vico, Kuhn and predominantly from the writings of Foucault. In a hostile reading, Said's application of Foucault's theories may seem imitative. Readers may well ask: is Said's indictment of Orientalist texts for their Eurocentrism merely a duplication of the Foucauldian project—which is to make Western man rigorously self-conscious about the furthest limits of his discourse? Is it possible for Said to utilize the post-structuralist method without surrendering to its ideology? In effect, is Said's method at odds with his thesis? The purpose of this paper is to examine the implications of this question by isolating the specific character of Foucault's influence on Said's *Orientalism*.

The Theme of Origins

The nature of influence inheres in and circulates around the theme of origins. In an earlier book titled *Beginnings* (1975) one notices, from hindsight, Said's preoccupation with the problem of origins. The notion of an originary moment in the history of an individual, race or civilization where an idea or a set of ideas or a particular mode of perceiving reality may be said to have emerged is recognized by post-structuralist thinkers like Foucault to be a highly problematic notion, for it leads to nostalgia and all its attendant falsifications. Foucault's unfolding of the theme of origins needs quoting in order that we might appreciate its particular quality which Said has elsewhere described as "a poetics of thought"⁸

Why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit of the origin (*Ursprung*), at least on those occasions when he is truly a genealogist? First, because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities, because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession. This search is directed to 'that which was already there,' the image of a primordial truth fully adequate to its nature; it necessitates the removal of every mask to ultimately disclose an original identity. However if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is 'something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essences were fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms. What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin, it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.

History also teaches how to laugh at the solemnities of the origin. . . . The origin always precedes the Fall . . . it is associated

with the gods, and its story is always sung as a theogony. But historical beginnings are lowly . not in the sense of modest or discreet like the steps of a dove, but derisive and ironic, capable of undoing every infatuation ⁴

Foucault's point is that the search for origins is essentialist and militates against a proper sense of historicity. For the colonized people, such a search for their origins is doubly foreclosed, 'derisive and ironic,' because the process of colonization meant precisely the wiping out of their history, traditions and language. As an instance of this foreclosure, Said glances at the Middle East as the locus for their biblical origins. 'All pilgrimages to the Orient passed through, or had to pass through, the Biblical lands, most of them in fact were attempts either to relive or to liberate from the large, incredibly fecund Orient some portion of Judaeo-Christian/Greco-Roman actuality.'⁵ The consequence of these investments, as Said has repeatedly emphasized in his writings, is the denial of human rights, legal right of residence, the status of nationhood and the historical identity accruing to the Palestinian people ⁶ The Palestinian problem is a dramatic case of the ways in which the colonizing impulse veils its real economic, political and ideological origins by the simple expedient of calling every Palestinian a terrorist.

Fanon had recognized that in the triangular dialogue between the settler, the native and the native intellectual there is 'a permanent confrontation on the phantasmic plane.'⁷ In this realm versions of origins are offered and resisted in a continuing dialectic, thus Fanon likens the self-justifying ideological operation of colonialism to the mother 'who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts. The colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology and its own unhappiness which is its very essence.'⁸

In this Oedipal tyranny the search for identity by the colonized people continually returns to the terms of opposition set by the colonial mother. In effect the search for Aryan/Islamic/Semite origins becomes for the colonized people a longing for an impossible purity and a yearning for the fullness of meaning that is not only uncritical but also politically suspect in that it can unwittingly serve the reactionary forces of revivalism. Nowhere is this danger greater than in the Indian context, where the search for the source of Hindu identity in the Vedic times has almost invariably led to a loss of commitment to our contemporary plural/secular identity.

In *Beginnings* Said is therefore engaged in the project of decolonization by divesting himself of the illusion of origins, a project which involves an extensive play with its theoretical possibilities.

Those traditional conceptions of primacy such as source and origin, the principles of continuity and development, and those metaphors for originating authority such as author, discipline, and the will to

truth are all more or less cancelled by Foucault⁹

In Said's reading of Foucault the correlatives of the Western search for origins are several clusters of ideas which need some unpacking here. Origins, authority, author, the Law of the Father—by its own inner logic the quest for the originary moment (in history, in collective consciousness) moves insistently towards fixing a document which is made canonical because it inaugurates the origin. The discovery of the origin is made authoritative by scholarship, sealed off by commentaries which argue and debate but continue to affirm the authority of the initial discovery. Thus authority and all its connotations of authoritativeness, the chief of which is the tyranny of the author, is confirmed (see Foucault's 'What Is an Author?'). Origins are also implicated in narrative and representation, in the novelistic model of successive continuity which gives formal reassurance of a beginning, middle and end. This chain of begetting and fatherhood, mixing memory and desire, constitutes a patrimony which, in relation to the ideological operation of patriarchy, becomes a celebration of the Law of the Father, disguised so successfully as to be invisible.

These then would seem to be the ideological correlatives of the Western sign, the interlocking series by which Western man fabricates his 'self' into a coherent identity, positing himself as beginning and end of all Knowledge and grandly naming it Humanism. As Foucault formulates it, 'Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject'¹⁰. This Foucauldian position against the dominant humanist tradition has still to be evaluated in the perspective of our times but what can be said at once without fear of contradiction is that it becomes peculiarly liberating for Said. He is freed from the endless speculations about a lost, pure, pre-colonial origin and from the necessity of posing a real Orient against the set of fictions in the Orientalist texts. Thus Said makes abundantly clear in his Introduction that his purpose is not to recover a reality behind the European distortions and mis-representations, but instead to focus steadily on the production of the Orient as a textual construct. To quote Said: 'It is clear, I hope, that my concern with authority does not entail analyses of what lies hidden in the Orientalist text, but analysis rather of the text's surface, its exteriority to what it describes' (p. 20).

In repudiating 'what lies hidden in the Orientalist text' Said is working towards a dismantling of the entire machinery of origins, inasmuch as this machinery dictates a specific way of apprehending reality in terms of depths and surfaces. Within this cognitive metaphor which clothes all our thinking, the past is perceived as a surface, and analysis assumes the unconscious arrogance of discovering its depth or inner meaning.

Some of these influential theoretical positions regarding origins have thus provided Said with a point of entry into the ongoing critique of colonialism and post-colonialism. The Third-World intellectual must grasp the entire cause and effect machinery of origins and the different knottings

produced in it. It remains to be seen what Said's claim of liberation leads to—does it remain an imitation of Foucauldian selfconsciousness while trapped within the constituting paradoxes of the Western philosophical tradition? Furthermore, if all roads lead to false origins, where does inquiry begin without being implicated in false origins? These are some of the questions and the area of address of the next section.

The Materiality of the Text

Said's provisional beginning or point of incision in *Orientalism* is not so much a re-inscription of the motivations of European mercantile capitalism, as the emergence of a new 'field' of knowledge known as Orientalist studies. The concept of a field is the fundamental organizing principle in Foucault's writings, and at the simplest level of resonance Foucault intends a 'field' to mean the formal conditions which make the appearance of meaning possible. Right away one can discern the gains of locating knowledge in the field of its historical practice, in that which grants it an official voice, and the political context of power relations in which this voice situates itself.

The notion of a field is primarily a notion of space, and Foucault's dominant concern is with the element of space in which language and thought occur. His studies have consistently been addressed to their formation as discursive fields, in Gayatri Spivak's phrase as 'power-in-space'.¹¹ In conceiving Orientalist studies as a field or a power-in-space Said has seized a peculiarly effective strategy to make Orientalist studies visible as a monument in the Foucauldian sense—its symmetry of assumptions, metaphors, binary oppositions, even its physical solidity and power of interference. There is a certain ironic fit in the methodological apparatus of a 'field' as applied to the narrative of colonization. Said seems to be gesturing towards the imperial aggrandizement of space—both outer geographical space of the colonised country and inner psychic space of the colonized people. The notion of a field also tends to create startling relationships of similitude and difference between those who are made visible and those who are invisibilized. By no means is the diachronic framework denied or obscured; in fact the Foucauldian field pays attention to the timeframe internal to a field.

In the first chapter of *Orientalism* Said disrupts the chronology of narrative by intertwining the public speeches of Lord Balfour, Lord Kromer and Kissinger in order to familiarize the reader with the range of consensus or one-voicedness that is produced and disseminated by the discursive field of Orientalist studies. In fact the entire first section of the book outlines the scope and sets the stage for a detailed examination of Anglo-French Orientalist scholarship in Islamic studies.

Said is by no means undertaking to prescribe a meta-text of colonialism which would contain a model anterior to its historical concreteness. His

commitment is to histories rather than 'a grand, enveloping notion of History',¹² to the specificity of the severally different colonial histories of the Palestinian, the African, the Indian. The corollary of the search for origins is the search for *the* historical model of production-relations and the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Foucault suggests a more modest claim that returns the historian to his role as archivist without the privilege of and claims to a universal truth:

The historical sense . . . must only be the acuity of a view that distinguishes, distributes, disperses, allows free play to deviations and limits—a kind of view that dissociates, is capable of dissociating itself, and is capable of erasing the unity of that human being who is supposed to carry the view in a sovereign manner towards his past.¹³

Said has commented on 'the constitutive ambivalence towards history'¹⁴ evident in Foucault's writings and interviews, an ambivalence that stems from a reaction against the disease in the historiography of the West. The positive side of this ambivalence is a commitment to a new kind of history that is directed against identity and based on counter-memory, that parodies monumental history and opposes the theme of history as reminiscence/recognition. Most significantly, such a view of history must be judged by the histories of the repressed other than it uncovers—the hysteric woman, the insane, the criminal and the sexual outlaw—the putting of these histories against the mainstream and dominant History of reminiscence and recognition. Finally consider the Foucauldian refusal to generalise these case-studies into a general theory of history. It would be well to remember these Foucauldian strictures before reading into Said's *Orientalism* a theory to fit all colonial experience.

As Said sees it, the antecedents of the opposition between Europe and its exotic other extend back to the Christian picture of Islam during the Middle Ages and Renaissance and even further back to Aeschylus' *The Persians*. However Said's provisional beginning is at the point in European history when the assumptions about identity and otherness are organised, systematised and institutionalised into a discipline with its own methodological apparatus.

Said's method of approaching the field of Arabic studies is to grant it the status of a semi-autonomous production of discourse. Said problematizes this mode of production not by asking the false question of its 'primordial origins' but by making more circumspect inquiries. What are the first emergences of this field, its pre-conceptual level, what is its history of institutionalisation? What is its characteristic way of approaching its object of study? Further, what relationship does this field posit between the object of its study and the investigator? What are its buried cognitive metaphors (resemblances? depth and surfaces? correspondences?).

The economic, political and military appetites of nineteenth century Europe are, according to Said, typified by, rather than attributed to, the

method employed by Napoleon's systematic campaign in Egypt. Said's analysis calls attention to the method by which Napoleon's military acquisition of Egypt was consolidated by the compilation of exhaustive information by a team of scientists, geographers, historians and archaeologists. This close alliance and mutual interdependence between scholarly research on the one hand and military administration and State policy-making on the other, was such that the scholars in Said's words became the 'learned division' of the army.

In Said's reading of the event, Napoleon's campaign is not the first irruption of desire on the body of the colonial text, but it does mark the systematic impulses in what now becomes discernible as the Orientalist project. Said notes features in the project that will recur again and again—Egypt becomes a site of desire in the power-struggle between France and England, a newly-discovered arena for the recovery of national and personal glory. Yet Napoleon's conscious strategy only sought out what was latent in the memories of his adolescence—the 'memories and glories that were attached to Alexander's Orient generally and to Egypt in particular' (p. 80). Thus the discovery of Egypt is only a re-vision, an imaginative engagement with the myth of Alexander, Europe discovering the glorious chapter in its own past and laying the foundations for the psycho-social phenomena of Napoleonism.

What differentiates the originary moment (Alexander's Orient) from the retracing (Napoleon's campaign) are the sources of desire—Napoleon's reading of Marigny's historical account and Comte de Volney's travelogue, the summary he makes of these accounts in his youthful manuscripts and his written reflections on the campaign assessing the difficulties in Egypt's annexation, culminating in the monumental 23 volumes of the *Description de l'Egypte*. Not only is the campaign and its consequences textual, but in fact the sources of Napoleon's desire belong to 'the realm of ideas and myths culled from texts, not empirical reality'. He saw the Orient only as it had been encoded first by classical texts and then by Orientalist experts, whose vision, based on classical texts, seemed a useful substitute for any actual encounter with the real Orient' (p. 80).

The value of this textual knowledge in its preceding and postdating the military campaign lies in the way it enables the military project to acquire currency in cultural practices. Napoleon's preparations involve appeals to the people in Arabic protesting his benevolence. This benevolence took the forms of wooing the local imams into interpreting the Koran in favour of his invasion because "Napoleon tried everywhere to prove that he was fighting for Islam" (p. 82). What Victor Hugo perceived as Napoleon's tact consisted of a veneration for the language, the commissioning of translations and a whole technique that Said describes as the 'use of the scholars to manage his contacts with the natives' (p. 82). The close interdependence between power and knowledge gave impetus to

the scientific project in Renan's works and the geopolitical project in Lessep's Suez Canal.

The analogues between the power/knowledge formation in Napoleon's campaign and the power-in-knowledge of the Orientalists in India bear contemplation. The scholarship of men like William Jones and the civilizing mission of the Orientalists consisted of the discovery of manuscripts, translations, the interpretation of religious texts and the introduction of the printing press, all of which helped 'to render it completely open, to make it completely accessible to European scrutiny' (p. 83). Not only did this scholarly work contribute to the administrative/military project of Empire-building, but it also helped to reduce the alien otherness of the country into the manageable proportions of a 'field' of knowledge, just as 'Egypt was to become a department of French learning' (p. 83). The Orientalist/Anglicist controversy, and its resurrection in recent years in order to discredit Said's thesis, is taken up for detailed examination in Ms. Sunderajan's paper. My reasons for drawing attention to the relationship of similitude/difference between the Napoleonic project and the Orientalist project is to suggest the implications of Said's thesis—namely that European political appropriation of the East was not a 'sudden, dramatic afterthought' but 'a long and slow process of appropriation . . . transforming itself from being textual and contemplative into being administrative, economic and even military' (p. 210).

The point of slippage here—from addressing the specific material conditions of a discursive field to the subsequent claim that in fact the textual precedes the political—has been debated and criticised so urgently by Indian readers of *Orientalism*, that it might be useful to pause and consider it from all angles. In what senses does Said claim legitimacy for treating colonialism as a textual construct? Furthermore, how is the power latent in the textual lay the conditions for the power manifest in the military and the political? What is the nature and extent of textualisation that Said is claiming for the colonial phenomena? Is it local to Arabic studies?

Part of the answer lies in understanding the notions of power and textuality that Said employs in *Orientalism*. In the *Introduction* Said says: 'I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse . . . to identify Orientalism' (p. 3). This statement is corroborated by Said's extensive commentary in Chapter five of *Beginnings* titled 'Abecedarium Culturae: Absence, Writing, Statement, Discourse, Archeology, Structuralism'. Here Said is concerned with making a radical distinction between the Foucauldian notion of textuality on the one hand and the structuralists' and deconstructionists' enterprise on the other. The structuralists, according to him are unable to show why structure structures and therefore shares a fundamental disability with the 'nihilistic radicality' of Derrida, namely that both are unable to account for the human activity of revolutionary change. For Said the Foucauldian

definition of discourse 'differs from all this in its affirmativeness, its progressivism, and its energetic discoveries' (p. 342).

What are the energetic discoveries Said perceives in Foucault? It seems to me that it would be misleading to examine the Foucauldian conception of discourse without also considering the other end of the pole, which always and everywhere for Foucault is the structure of power. Foucault has tried to think through the relations between power and knowledge by rupturing the habitual ways of thinking about power based on law (what is legitimate and illegitimate power?) and institutional models (what is the state?). Thus Foucault proposes a new economy of power-relations from the point of view not of its internal rationality (what it says about the need for its existence) but the 'antagonism of strategies.' Foucault's intention is an analysis of power not from its universal and universalising origins but its origins in the other it represses and outlaws. The specific forms of resistance define and describe the specific configurations of power. To speak of power from the position of resistance to it, to valorize the perceptions of the resisting people or group is to take up a combative and subversive position against its influence. Consider for instance the flexible position it allows Said in the study of nineteenth-century philology. Said is able to violate the hermetically sealed space of philology and its claims of grandeur by recognising the power-relations hidden under its disinterested search for truth. Speaking of Renan he notices the imperial sweep of assumption: "He constructs, and the very act of construction is a sign of imperial power over recalcitrant phenomena, as well as a confirmation of the dominating culture and its 'naturalization'." Indeed, it is not too much to say that Renan's philological laboratory is the actual locale of his European ethnocentrism;" (pp. 145-46). The continuing prestige of a discipline like Orientalism or its parent-discipline nineteenth-century philology will not allow the decoding of its power-relations in the political languages we speak. Said can describe the tyranny of colonial power only by gauging its productivity at the level where it is materialised temporally-spatially into a technology, an institution or a micro-practice.

It is precisely at this theoretical juncture that Foucault rejoins the materialist tradition, at the point where he envisions power/knowledge as discernible only in their material, bodily and institutional practices. Foucault's particular interest is in the material forms that are secreted around a discourse at the exact moment of its institutionalisation. Thus we are made aware of the process by which philology and anthropology acquire the power of self-perpetuation through the archive, the library, the Asiatic society and its modern avatar in area-studies. Philology in its nineteenth-century manifestation invented a doctrine (unlocking the roots of esoteric languages popularised as reduced model of the Oriental) by which Oriental languages are reduced to their linguistic roots, then further reduced to a matter of race, racial character,

thus reintroducing, as Said says, the prejudices of racial type and stereotype by a new and impeccable strategy) and also an institutional site. For Said this institutional site, in Ernest Renan's case, consisted of the sealed space of pedagogic practice—the class room in which he instructed the initiate reinforced by the sealed space of the library and the archive. Language as it circulates in these institutional sites is obsessed by its origins but never questions the privilege of its statement.

Said argues that similar impulses were operative in nineteenth century anthropology. The discursive hierarchy in Sacy's writings posits the relation between the Orientalist and the Oriental as one in which the former writes, whereas the latter is written about. Anthropology is essentialist in its founding presuppositions, for it reduces every discrete act of the Oriental's behaviour under study to a predictable pre-existing Orientalist essence. Religious-ethnic categories are the basic unit of analysis and only secondarily is the socio-economic category employed. The arbitrariness of the premises of anthropology in the school of Silvestre de Sacy, has been sardonically commented on by Claude Alvarez: the study of the white man is sociology, all the rest is anthropology (*Homo Faber*).

The effectiveness of colonial discourse lies in its ability to veil its 'lowly' origins, to invisibilise its institutional sitings and deflect attention from its material existence. To combat this tendency Foucault emphasises the role of non-discursive elements in constituting a discourse. Thus he speaks of individual texts as statement-events in order to call attention, in Said's words, to 'their status as events, and also their density as things—that is, their duration, and paradoxically, their monumentality, their characters as monuments'¹⁵ Foucault defines the materiality specific to discourse: 'The rule of materiality that statements obey is therefore of the order of the institution rather than of the spatio-temporal localization, it defines the possibilities of reinscription and transcription—the schemata of use constitutes a field of stabilization'¹⁶

This, it seems to me is Foucault's original contribution to the materialist conception of discourse. It enables Said to improvise a convincing argument about the growth of institutional sites which accommodated the Orientalists, systematised their endeavour and dictated the schemata of use, prescribed 'the first law of what can be said'¹⁷ and installed a mode of production which efficiently printed, translated, researched and funded, till in time it acquired the habit of self-legislation and what Said calls the habit of infinite self-reference. My intention here is to gesture towards the kind of influence Said's book has had in the Third World. One example is Gauri Vishwanathan's forthcoming book on the ideology of English literary studies in India. One of her arguments is that the teaching of English literature, its institutionalisation and pedagogic practice originated in colonial India. If that is demonstrably true, then the right of parentage has all too effectively been hidden from us. Colonial discourse, in its moment of institutionalisation invests, it would seem, a good deal of power

is veiling its 'ironic and derisive' origins. To go back to the question posed at the start, it is important to know that in his statements about power/knowledge Foucault disavows any intention of reducing knowledge to its disciplinary function. Knowledge is not the hypothetical base of power nor is it wholly reducible to the practice of power. What gives Foucault's statements about power/knowledge the air of being severely uncompromising is a lifetime's study of the marginalised in the civilization he belongs to. After such knowledge, what forgiveness?

Said of necessity stands outside the philosophical tradition which Foucault can excoriate and belong to with simultaneous ease. Said cannot assume the authorial space of Foucault, cannot speak from his vantage-point. This obvious truth dissolves the question of Foucault's influence on Said. The acknowledgement of this truth in a spirit of freedom enables the detachment with which Said can speak of the 'drama' of Foucault's work, a drama in which the latter 'is always coming to terms with language as both the constricting horizon and the energising atmosphere within and by which all human activity must be understood. Foucault . . . has been trying to overcome this tyranny by laying bare its working.'¹⁸

The tyranny of textuality is neither binding nor tyrannical for Said, but a strategic technique of estrangement. For if the African/Indian/Palestinian has been constructed as a semiotic field, and the colonising impulse works in and through language, then we are not confronted by the tyranny of the already-happened of historical events, but instead are faced with the possibilities of re-interpretation, revision and change. Furthermore the materiality of a text provides another kind of insertion/intervention by the Third-World scholar. In his essay "The World, The Text, The Critic" Said provides his own definition of textuality. "A text is a 'being in the world' and has 'ways of existence' that are always 'enmeshed in circumstance, time, place'¹⁹ and society-in short, they are in the world, and hence are worldly"¹⁹ thus the materiality of a text is liberating precisely because it is conditioned by usage, is capable of being appropriated, and contains a discursive space in which each reader and writer can assume the subject-functions.

Said's debt to Foucault lies in learning a way of looking at language which discloses how language permits, legislates and perpetuates discriminations of otherness and sameness. 'This idea of differences' Said says 'can be theoretically extended to include differences among societies'²⁰ By contrast Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has taken the somewhat more aggressive position that Foucault's studies of otherness are not informed by the aggrandisement of space through imperialism, from which she concludes that Foucault's case-studies of mental illness, clinical practice, the prison, sexuality and the rise of the human sciences are 'screen-allegories that foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism.'²¹ Such a serious omission has "the effect of consolidating the ideology

of imperialism" and the illusion that analysis of any space in the West can be self-contained.

Thus Said is not alone in defining his position against and in relation to Foucault. The disruptive power of Said's rewriting the nineteenth century episteme in *Orientalism* lies in the way he is able to read off the assumptions of its originating disciplines (philology, anthropology, Darwinism, the Romantic cult of subjectivity and the beholding eye) and implicate them in the project of naturalising imperialist power. In *Orientalism* Said has been misunderstood as prescribing a will-to-power in all Orientalist texts when he only meant to suggest the suspicion of a relationship. In the course of his ramblings, Said pauses to appreciate the humanist tradition within Orientalism in the person of Raymond Schwab, Louis Massignon, Erich Auerbach to name a few. Yet the consequence of *Orientalism* has been to lay fissures of suspicion along the entire length of nineteenth century discourses, and its before and after. The power of *Orientalism* to rupture, by posing what Terry Eagleton calls 'the genuinely theoretical question . . . (which) is always violently estranging, a perhaps impossible attempt to raise to self-reflexivity the very enabling conditions of a range of routinized practices'²² can be gauged by the comments of the editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Orientalism is important because it addresses issues which are (or ought to be) central to the self-conception of scholars who are professionally socialized in and work in one culture but who devote themselves to the study of another culture. The essential issue he grapples with—and for which he ought to be read, whether all his arguments succeed or not—is the problem of what might be called the affiliations of knowledge. Now, in the final analysis, even an ardent proponent of Said's critical approach would do well to decide where it must all end. . . One can only go on protesting against the tyranny of the document or of language itself for so long; then one either has to reach some sort of agreement with oneself and get on with the scholarly work at hand, or else one must face up to the fact of ultimate inexpressibility and depart from the scene of the struggle—into silence or into some other walk of life.²³

The sense of paralysis evident in the above passage is specific to the First World scholars and scholarship that feel besieged by Said's violently estranging question—how is an episteme or world-view conveyed by certain relations of power and what is the political imperative behind it? It is for the apologists of neocolonialism and the scholars advancing under its protection (in order to refine what Spivak calls the methods of 'efficient information retrieval')²⁴ to refuse the power/knowledge equation. The continual play between power/knowledge can only cease when the Third-World captures the institutional sites which churn out information about it (is the Indian sub-continent stable or is a revolution imminent? Is the Punjab question going to destabilize India?), and represents the Third

World to itself. Until the Third-World becomes self-determining both in its political institutions and the institutions of civil society, Said's question is a necessary warning and political imperative

Returning to the question with which this essay began—what is the ideology of the Foucauldian method? The question needs rephrasing because Foucault's endeavour is precisely against the universalism of a method with the power of infinite application, however consoling such a 'grand, enveloping' notion of a model might be. Therefore Said warns against the tendency to extrapolate a method from Foucault's writings which can serve as a 'passkey'²⁵ to unlock texts. If Foucault's textual practice has any ideological core, it lies in his conception of the social function of the intellectual which necessitates a dedication to uncovering and rupturing the categories of otherness that the ruling classes in a society repress, outlaw and commit to the social margins of the asylum and the prison. It seems to me that the definitive Marxist critique of Foucault's work has yet to be made. As a preliminary however it may be noticed how Said stands outside the family-quarrel of the Western philosophical tradition and perceives, for his purpose, not an irreconcilable difference between Marxism and Foucault but a broad consensus: 'I do not think Foucault and Deleuze are unjustified in seeing their philosophy of decenterment as revolutionary, at least in its reliance upon an intellectual who views his role within his discipline and its institutional supports as an adversary one. The intellectual makes it his task to controvert the dynastic role thrust upon him by history or habit. Here Foucault and Deleuze rejoin the adversary epistemological current found in Vico, in Marx and Engels, in Lukacs, in Fanon.'²⁶

The notion of the adversarial role of the intellectual has an honourable lineage, and it is noteworthy that Fanon's celebrated statement "colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence"²⁶—occurs at the beginning of a lengthy meditation on the role of the intellectual in the process of decolonisation. Fanon is concerned both with the reactionary consequences of the intellectual training of the colonialist bourgeoisie and the dilemma of the native intellectual. Fanon's prescription of violence obviously refers to what he calls 'violence in action' but his meaning can also be extended to, and be coterminous with Foucault's notion of rupture by theoretical activism.

Several possibilities are opened up by Said's alignment with and raiding of the adversarial traditions of the West. Foremost among them, is the strategic positioning of the post-colonial intellectual, who is able to maintain a perceptual distance vis-a-vis the official discourses which is far enough for him to see its rupture and near enough to imagine another episteme. The maintenance of this perceptual distance explains the dichotomy between Foucault's anti-humanism and Said's chosen label of a

humanist. Many readers have felt dissatisfied with Said's allegiance to the nomenclature of humanism because in the contentious scenario he draws in his book, the humanist stance can only be read as weak-kneed liberalism. Elsewhere Said has commented on the anomalies of choosing the label 'a description for which I have contradictory feelings of affection and revulsions'²⁷

The problem here involves much more than Said's political position, for it has to do with the range of perceptual distance that the critic of colonialism accommodates himself in, with regard to his situation in history and the mutations of his culture. Thus Said's beleaguered position as a academic fighting for the human rights of his fellow-Palestinians from within the privileged world of American academia makes it impossible for him to afford the luxury of Foucault's anti-humanism. Said's work after *Orientalism* has moved away from Foucault's theoretical activism in preference for an interventionist critical practice.²⁸ What are the methodological and ideological alliances that the Indian intellectual must seek out, in order that he/she may break the hegemony of cultural colonialism? In a hostile reading of this essay, it might very well be argued that the relationship I have posited, between Foucault-Said-Third World reader, is itself guilty of inscribing the colonial practices of imitation/dependency in terms of source-and-influence. The concluding section is therefore an attempt to examine the implications of the final suspicion—has Said's *Orientalism* helped to rejuvenate the bankruptcy of Western research and contributed towards making the Third-World into the new site for theory?

Is the Third-World Woman a Site for Theory?

At the last level of analysis, Said's *Orientalism* posits a series of disruptive questions about colonial discourse, the theme of origins and the Oriental woman. Said is able to show with considerable acuity how even the most objective and neutral European accounts of the Orient contain metaphorical commonplaces about the Orient's female penetrability and supine malleability. In the travelogue-genre women are the creatures of male power fantasy of 'unlimited and undifferentiated sensuality' (p. 190). What Said especially notes is the ways in which Orientalist scholarship has been very much a male guild with a male conception of the world which tends to be static, frozen and fixed eternally. Said's brief comments provoke a whole line of inquiry. It is in the commonality of a history of subordination that the Orient as other and woman as other can be linked. The question that women's studies must address themselves to is—what is the nature of their presence in colonial discourse about them?

Here it would seem Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has performed major analytic incisions, both in her pirouetting role of feminist appropriations of narcissism, and her role as wise woman prophesying the pitfalls

in the future. Any statement in her wake might have the unfortunate air of the always-already-happened. I will however attempt to recover my own subject-position by submitting to the final Foucauldian question—who is speaking here? As a teacher of literary texts, I have an obvious investment in Said's valorization of the interpretive activity as a means of social transformation. As a woman teacher however I am cautious of the modish trends that seek to give me the dubious privilege of being made the site of and the space in which theories of subaltern consciousness are made and re-made. Is race as illuminating a category as gender and class? If so, what are the points of intersection and displacement?

Here I would like to use as my analytical text Costa Gavras' film 'Hanna K.', both for its dialogue with Western liberal feminism and for its treatment of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The film has a provocative thesis which unfolds by the constant juxtaposition of the Palestinian's battle with the Israeli state for his right of residence in his ancestral home against the narrative of the woman lawyer's battle with Israeli patriarchy for her right over her body. Hanna is faced with two sets of questions at the beginning of the film. One concerns the theme of origins latent in the Jewish claim to the Biblical lands and the Palestinians' counter-claim to their ancestral home: the other set of questions concerns the theme of origins in patriarchy which obstructs Hanna's right to be a single parent vis-a-vis her Israeli lover's counter-claim to his natural right of dominance as the father of her child.

Hanna gradually discovers the relationship between the two sets of questions. The spectators' recognition of the interconnections between the feminist question and the Palestinian questions however pre-dates Hannah's because of Costa-Gavras' characteristic use of the camera to include that which his characters will not or cannot perceive. For instance Hanna and her ex-husband looked down at the city of Jerusalem with the enthusiasm of tourists who may never need to come in contact with the non-Jew Muslim inhabitants of the city, a fact underscored on the sound-track by the Muslim call to prayer. Hanna stumbles into her first legal case defending a bizarre Palestinian who keeps insisting on his right to his house. Subsequently Hanna is drawn into further involvement in the case as she learns how the other history of Jerusalem and the other inhabitants of the city are invisibilized and left out of the reckoning. They can only be evoked at the level of the family photographs mounted on the wall of a house that has been declared a historical monument.

Thus the dispossessed Palestinian in the film may not even claim his ancestral home because it already belongs to the past, his contemporary reality has been seized and put in the past tense. Costa-Gavras' sense of irony at this strategy of the Israeli state is reminiscent of Said's argument in a recent article 'The Ideology of Difference'. Here Said demonstrates that the historical persecution of the Jews has been accorded such a sympathetic niche in Western imagination as to make it possible for "the discourse

of Israeli democracy . . . its ideological privileges within Western discourse" (p. 46) to isolate the Palestinians' rights and make it seem different to all other issues of civil rights in the world. This makes it possible to ignore the historical origins of the Palestinians "as a people already in Palestine *before* the advent of Zionist colonisation" (p. 50, emphasis mine). The theme of origins, it would seem is ironised and foreclosed for the Palestinians. As a lawyer fighting for the Palestinian's legal rights and discovering Israeli colonial aggression and self-righteousness, Hanna turns to look at the Palestinian and wonders aloud "Maybe he doesn't even exist."

Such a strategy for the disappearance of the other history of a people interconnects in the film's logic with the strategies for the invisibilisation and privatisation of a woman's history. It is another of the film's ironies that Hanna begins to lose the chivalric protection that had *produced* her notion of individuality at the exact point when she begins to utilise that individuality to question the colonial discourse operative in the law-courts and the patriarchal discourse operative in the home. Costa-Gavras' intention seems to be to problematize the assumptions of Western liberal feminism by displacing its narrative in that geographical locale (the Middle East) and political context (the Palestinian question) which seriously jeopardises the assumptions of Western liberalism.

At the end of the film, when Hanna throws out all the men in her life only to find the terrifying might of the Israeli police at her doorstep, we are given a new version of Costa-Gavras' old theme. The state is the most powerful terrorist, and its machine-guns can be turned against its own rebellious women. The film has however contained a new and more hopeful theme, which I understand as Costa-Gavras' conviction that the feminist struggle can attain consciousness about the colonisation of women's bodies and minds only by their consciousness of and alliance with other colonial struggles. This alliance does not entail the subsuming of the feminist consciousness in the primary category of colonial exploitation. By remaining an alliance it serves to disrupt the ideological compact between colonial and patriarchal discourses.

Several problems remain however with the film's text. Hanna represents a special kind of signifier in the colonial text, for she is a Jew, a white woman and a lawyer—all three aspects of her identity cumulatively increasing her privilege. Throughout the film she is perceived by the men around her through the clouding perspective of her sexual allure. Till the very last Hanna is never shown to be critical of being treated as a sex-object. For instance she is complacent about being slapped by her Israeli lover because she is ideologically trained to be indulgent towards the gestures of male possessiveness. We see however that her privilege as sex-object is constantly being encroached upon by the threatening phone-calls and social harassment due to her harbouring the Palestinian in her house. More insidiously, the early mornings when Hanna stands before the open door of the refrigerator crying because she cannot decide whether to have or not

have the baby, serves to underscore her loneliness and limited value as a sex-object.

In the role of protector Hanna assumes vis-a-vis the Palestinian—as lawyer, as the mother nursing him back to health after his hunger-strike, as lover—is she re-playing the socially ordained roles with disappointing repetitiveness? In the visual tableau at the law-court, Hanna stands a little above and to the side of the Palestinian. Subsequently the development of the relationship shifts the position somewhat so that the Palestinian stands level with Hanna. Many of my women friends have found the relationship disappointing precisely at the point when it becomes that of lovers. They have been disturbed by the implication that the feminist project in fighting for the cause of oppressed people may lose its seriousness in the anarchy of sexual promiscuity. Such a viewpoint must be taken into account in any discussion of Hanna's assertion of her sexual freedom as against many Indian women spectators' response that this brand of sexual freedom is not relevant to their own struggles. My own understanding is that the tone in Costa-Gavras' film underplays the sexual dimension so that it becomes only one aspect of the relationship, and not necessarily the prescriptive aspect at all. The brief embrace comes at the end of Hanna's protracted spell as a spy on his supposedly terrorist activities, and the embrace is a spontaneous expression of shame and relief that the Palestinian is what he says he is—a human being with the full right to his own humanity and integrity.

If then Hanna continues to stand above and to the side of the Palestinian, except for the momentary equality of lovers, we need to ask where in Costa-Gavras's text is the other signifier—the Palestinian woman? The film opens with her bent over the child in her lap, a figure draped in billowing clothes and outlined against the dark house behind her, waiting for the Israeli police to complete the job of bombarding the house. For the rest of the film she disappears and is not even there on the mental horizons of the characters. In Costa-Gavras' film the Palestinian woman only has the status of the inaugural iconic moment.

If one were however to extend and play with the margins of Costa-Gavras' text, where could the Palestinian women be inserted? Will she always and everywhere identify with the goals and methods of her brothers and husbands? Alternately what are the issues and historical junctures at which the Third-World woman distinguishes her problems from that of the national/colonial struggle? The film does manage to suggest that the young man uses forms of resistance that have historically been associated with women—silence, stealth and self-destruction. However if the Palestinian man is not given any awareness of Hanna's sexual oppression, we are unable to imagine his awareness of the double oppression of the women of his own race.

The film only permits a dialogue with Hanna, and that too only in the frame of reference of Hanna's consciousness. This is a blindness peculiar

to Costa-Gavras' films. He naturalises this frame of reference in *Hanna K* and *Missing* in such a way that the individualistic stereotypes of the angry father and the non-conformist daughter-in-law in *Missing* as well as the single working mother in *Hanna K*. are valorized in their search for truth and escape the field of indictment. The single individual calling the system into question is still the glorified formula.

Thus the Palestinian woman cannot be inserted into the film because she would displace the seeker of truth (Hanna) or the object of truth (the Palestinian man). Hanna must continue to perform her defiance in the theatre of men, since any alliance between Hanna and her Palestinian female counterpart would disrupt the film altogether. Further, since the film's ideological apparatus is conveyed through Hanna's consciousness, the alliance might be weighted against the Palestinian woman's silence. Hanna will have the power to determine and control the subject-positions in which the other is placed in the film's text. The solutions Hanna is likely to offer her (individualism ? sexual freedom ?) may destroy her more effectively than the Israeli bombardment. Alliances between the women of warring countries are constantly being forged by the women's movement. However, in the film's male vision the category of gender elides colonial power with patriarchal power in an increasingly mystified operation. Thus Hanna can be allowed to loom large on the cinematic landscape because her presence facilitates the absence of the other.

This theme of presence facilitating the absence of the other is analogous to the state-of-art in theory today. The hunt for new sites for doctoral theses, data collection and theoretical reconstruction has aggrandised the Third World. When the avantgarde theorists of subject-production seek to make the Third-World woman the site for dismantling and re-assembling their theories, I experience an unease at the mode of my insertion into their text. If then I am the site for rethinking origins and reconstructing individual subjectively, the primitive anthropological subject serving (to use Said's phrase) as "a model for our imaginings of lost plentitude,"²⁹ how do I offer resistance and how is rupture to be achieved ?

Some preliminary reflections are offered here with a degree of tentativeness. To begin with, I can refuse the privilege of being the site for theory by recognising that just as my femaleness is not a given or a fixed and stable authorial space but a construct of history and culture, by the same token the coloniser and the colonised are not givens but subject-functions which may be occupied by different speakers at different times and circulate in a mobile and dynamic hierarchy of power-relations. At the very least, the colonised subject is marked by class and gender and the variable of individual self-determination. Then how is it possible to privilege the colonised subject in the role of transgressor in a text, as the signifier with the invariant and essential power of subversion ?

Said's *Orientalism* opens up all these questions to debate and discussion. How can we resist the theme of origins in which we are periodically

'discovered' as a bird of exotic plumage and forgotten at the end of each round of the Festival of India show? Post-Said, one of the tasks for Third-World scholarship is clearly that of meticulous documentation of the histories of their own institutions and disciplines that have naturalised colonialism and patriarchy. This documentation will be alert to their material bases, their reasons for coming into being, their founding presuppositions and their function in the politics of class, gender and racial discrimination. Said's example suggests a particular type of training for such scholarship which can be described as a system of interferences: the humility and rigour of the historian, the raiding of archives, the literary critic's suspicion of and devotion to language and the constant aggression of political activism. It is curious how the new critique of colonialism is retracing many of the conflicts that have appeared in the women's movement—the doubt-ridden relationship between feminism and the avant-grade, activism and theory, the possibility of a pure Archimedean space³⁰ from which to make beginnings, feminism and the theories of subjectivity. Said's *Orientalism* has also risked the judgement of posterity by "contamination" from the Foucauldian method. In doing so, Said's work has contributed to my own understanding of how to resist being re-anthropologised into a site for theory and how to work towards becoming its co-discoursing equal.

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- 2 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1967, p 48
- 3 Edward W Said, *Beginnings—Invention and Method*, Basic Books New York, 1975, p 289
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- 5 All subsequent page references are to Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p 168
- 6 Edward W Said, "The Ideology of Difference", *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn 1985, Vol 12, No 1, p 38-58
- 7 Fanon, *ibid*, p. 43
- 8 Fanon, *ibid*, p 170
- 9 Said, *Beginnings*, p 297
- 10 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans A.M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972, p. 12.
- 11 Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies Deconstructing Historiography", *Subaltern Studies, Writings on South Asian History and Society* ed Ranajit Guha OUP, Delhi, 1985, p 349.

RAJESWARI SUNDER RAJAN*

*After 'Orientalism' · Colonialism and English
Literary Studies in India*

"AFTER" in my title is intended as homage in several senses : to acknowledge that this essay is "according to" *Orientalism* even in that in several places it is an extended quotation and paraphrase of that work , to suggest that it intends to play at the margins of Edward Said's book, teasing out its implications and paying attention to at least one of the "tasks" that he acknowledges are left "incomplete" in his study , and, finally, to indicate that it takes into account Said's own work after *Orientalism*, in particular "The Text, the World, the Critic," and "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community."

To be a university lecturer in English in India, as I am, is to be intermittently aware of anomalies in one's position, and to be afflicted by doubts and uncertainties about one's relationship with the object of one's investigation, viz the English literary text. So in a sense this is an autobiographical account of my attempt to find this position and reach some clarity about this relationship. If for me this process originated with reading *Orientalism* (first published in 1978),¹ it is not to say that it is the only starting point for such an investigation. I merely trace the process here.

Said's thesis is simply put . the Orient comes into being as a *representation* within a discourse identified as Orientalism. Serving as the "other" of Europe, it is seen as variously strange, mysterious, corrupt, beautiful, decadent, etc., while fulfilling a variety of Europe's desires. The energy, scholarship and polemics of Said's work are directed towards stressing the power and systemization of this discourse, which is *not* merely "superstructural." Said finds Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony useful in showing how political society "reaches into the realms of civil society" which are the "cultural" areas (such as the academy, for instance), "and saturates them with significance of direct concern to it" (p. 11).

What are the further implications of this work ? Said himself points us to both empirical and theoretical tasks that await anyone undertaking a critique of Orientalism .

There is still a general essay to be written on imperialism and culture,

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other studies would go more deeply into the connection between Orientalism and pedagogy, or into Italian, Dutch, German & Swiss Orientalism, or into the dynamic between scholarship and imaginative writing, or into the relationship between administrative ideas and intellectual discipline . . . One would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power. (p. 24)

This is the sanction I invoke for using *Orientalism* as a starting-point for an analysis of the problem of English studies in India

Said also briefly identifies the position of the Oriental intellectual as he is constituted by Orientalism: he is designated as the "native informant" (p. 324). The "accommodation between the intellectual class and the new imperialism" is a "triumph" of the West (p. 324), in a sense made inevitable because of the West's offer of an easily accessible, codified, institutionalized and virtually commodified knowledge of the Orient. It returns to the Oriental a version of the Orient which he accepts and internalizes. Such complicity between the "master discourse" and the "native informant"² leads not only to a consolidation of the former, but an empowering of the latter. The colonial intellectual is able to constitute an elite with considerable political power in his own land.

These two aspects of *Orientalism*—the suggestion that there is a connection between Orientalism and pedagogy, and the genealogy of the Oriental intellectual—inhere at its margins. In what follows, I wish to explore these marginal aspects, firstly to outline the Orientalist/Anglicist controversy, as it appeared in India in the 1830s (of which Said does not take much cognizance), to offer a genealogy of the discipline of English literature in the Indian educational system (which involves a brief history of English literary criticism itself as an academic subject), to explicate Said's position in "the politics of interpretation," the materiality and aggressiveness of texts, and the implications of the institutionalization of "fields" of knowledge, and finally to reflect upon the English literature academic in India as post-colonial intellectual

I

The establishment of English as the language of administration and the medium of educational instruction in India in 1835 signalled the triumph of the "Anglicists," chief of whom was Macaulay whose 1835 Minute provided the justification for such an imposition. English literature as a subject was first established as a result of the 1853 India Act (also authorized by Macaulay), and the recommendations of the report of the Civil Service of the East India Company of 1855, both of which outlined an open competitive examination for civil services in India. It was decided that "English language and literature" would make up a 1000-mark paper in these examinations. Naturally pressure was created upon English universities (which put up a great deal of resistance initially)

to include language and literature as subjects in the curriculum. But it was not until 1893 that Oxford University's administration approved a school of English language and literature. Oxford's first "literary" Professor of English, Walter Raleigh, had however already begun his career as an English literature academic several years earlier at the Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh.³ It is only one of the ironies of colonial history that English literary studies should have had their beginnings in India and Africa.⁴

These aggressive "Anglicist" projects (which were accompanied by the first major interventionist legislations of the Company, such as the abolition of 'sati,' as well as by significant increase in missionary activity) would appear to be very far removed from the well-meaning and scholarly productions of the Orientalists, their dictionaries, translations, and editions of Sanskrit texts. This at least is the argument of contemporary Orientalists, one of whom has attacked Said in a review as an ignorant and aggrieved Orientalist (in contrast to Nehru, Tagore and Nirad Chaudhuri who regarded the Orientalists as friends and benefactors).⁵ Above all, he points out, the Orientalists were responsible for creating the Bengal "Renaissance" which is characterized by him as a "modernistic movement." "British Orientalism gave birth to the Bengal 'Renaissance' because it helped Indians to find an indigenous identity in the modern world"⁷ It did this by making them "conscious of a heritage of their very own", viz. of the Vedas and the Upanishads as "the scriptures of the Aryans"; of a newly created history which authenticated the great period of the Maur-yas and Guptas; and even of that "amorphous heritage" shaped into "a rational faith known now as 'Hinduism'"⁸ Such a benign and benevolent view is far removed from Said's "paranoia."

One explanation that is advanced for this difference is that Said's "orientalism" is too monolithic, and does not take into account the various "orientalisms" of China, Japan and India, some of which are described as being of an entirely different order from Anglo-French orientalism in West Asia. Said confesses that he is engaged most deeply with the orientalization of this region, and indeed makes considerable investment in his own position as a Western-educated Palestinian in this engagement. But to take the stand that the existence of varieties of orientalism invalidates Said's thesis about Orientalism is to make nonsense of the entire Foucauldian notion of discourse and its implications upon which that thesis is founded. Discourse analysis, such as the one conducted by Said, by "focus [sing] on that which is stable and persistent in the ordering of social reality" in different accounts, "can point to the assumptions shared by those who claim to be opposed to each other or are conceptualized in this manner"—such as the Orientalists and Anglicists.⁹

I am not confident of performing an extensive analysis of the discourse of the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy. But two shared assumptions as they relate to the introduction of the systematic study of English in India, may be pointed out.

i) Both Orientalists and Anglicists were implicated in the imperial project, and were therefore concerned with administrative efficiency and efficacy. The Orientalists just as much as the Anglicists were either members of the civil services and judiciary, or missionaries. They only differed in their methods while sharing the same goals. While the former argued that English would provide uniformity and "modernization," the latter held that :

Upon its [Sanskrit's] cultivation depends the means of native dialects to embody European learning and science. It is a visionary absurdity to think of making English the language of India. It should be extensively studied, no doubt, but the improvement of native dialects enriching them with Sanskrit terms for English ideas must be continued and to effect this, Sanskrit must be cultivated as well as English.¹⁰

Another Orientalist, W A Macnaghten argued that "if we wish to enlighten the great mass of the people of India we must use as our instruments the languages of India. .our object is to impart ideas, not words. " ¹¹ There is no desire evident here to preserve, perpetuate or promote native Indian languages for their own sake or for the sake of any innate superiority, but only a concern for the most effective implementation of British "ideas "

ii) Both groups held a poor opinion of the condition of contemporary India. Since the Anglicist project was to replace already existing native languages and literatures by the superior and advanced language and literature of the colonial powers, they indulged in easy denigration of the former :

Both nations [India and China] are to nearly an equal degree tainted with the vices of insincerity, dissembling, treacherous, mendacious, to an excess which surpasses even the unusual measure of uncultivated society etc

Macaulay boasted .

It is I believe no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected to form all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or social philosophy, the relative position of the nations is nearly the same.¹²

But the Orientalists were equally contemptuous of contemporary Indian culture, politics and peoples, they, however, sought to displace them with a version of an infinitely superior past culture and advocated the widespread study of Sanskrit. The veneration of the Vedic past was won at the cost of belittling the actual India in which they found themselves. The point is made amply clear in an essay by Gerald and Natalie Sirkin "The impracticability of the vernaculars for higher education, and the excessive delay that would result from the use of the vernaculars as the medium of instruction, were generally agreed upon by both parties . . .

The Orientalists were not prepared to argue against the predominant view that the objective of higher education in India was the introduction of useful knowledge that is, Western learning."¹³

Gayathri Spivak shows the complicity between the East India Company officials' endorsement and authorization of Hindu rulers in the native states (at the expense of the 'aboriginals'), and the Orientalist burst of poetry inscribed on the doorway of the Indian Institute at Oxford celebrating the friendship of India and Britain by designating India as "Aryavarta" (the land of Aryas)¹⁴ The Orientalist task of revivalism also required, we may note in passing, the entire suppression of the past five hundred years of Muslim rule. An "essential" India was discovered, dusted off, and resurrected as a compensation for "the obvious decrepitude and political impotence of the modern Oriental" (*Orientalism*, p. 79).

Thus the exigencies of colonial rule dictated the opposed positions of both Anglicists and Orientalists—and both were postulated upon the diagnosis of India as decadent and chaotic, and consequently in need of British rule as civilizing mission. A scenario of "good Orientalists" *versus* "bad Anglicists" which highlights their differences overlooks the common orientalizing project of both. For argument's sake we may further point out that Indian orientalism did not die out in 1835, while it ceased to have official British patronage, it continued to flourish under German and French scholarship. Max Muller, who held the chair of Orientalism at Oxford, began to bring out the *Sacred Books of the East* from 1875,¹⁵ and it appears that a new breed of American Orientalists (*pace* David Kopf) is alive and well.¹⁶

Said's deep distrust of Orientalist scholarship is legitimized by his close reading of several Orientalist texts, and the disclosure of their relationship as they constitute a discursive field. That this discourse was not—and could not be—a rarefied, immaterial and transcendent realm is proved in the Orient most dramatically by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt:

His plans for Egypt . . . became the first in a long series of European encounters with the Orient in which *the Orientalist's special expertise was put directly to functional colonial use*, for at the crucial instant when an Orientalist had to decide whether his loyalties and sympathies lay with the Orient or with the conquering West, he always chose the latter, from Napoleon's time on (p. 80). [emphasis added]

The knowledge/power equation that is revealed here is, acknowledgedly difficult to sustain from a humanist standpoint, where knowledge is presented as a disinterested search for the truth, and as a broadening of horizons (That such a presentation is profoundly ideological is another matter.) It is particularly interesting therefore to compare Raymond Schwab's *Oriental Renaissance* and Said's *Orientalism* together. (Said expresses deep admiration for and indebtedness to Schwab's pioneering work)¹⁷ We might see them as engaged in a profoundly enriching dialogue. While Schwab's is a great humanist work, celebrating the second Western

Renaissance in the discovery of the Orient, and announcing an "integral humanism," Said discusses the "enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively," through that same discovery (p 3)

Though Said reads prefigurations of Foucault's "archival formation" in Schwab's work, it remains a narrative, a rise-and-fall account of Orientalism. Said's synchronic method on the other hand resembles Foucault's closely: sees the dispersal, the changing lineaments, the persistence of Orientalism into the contemporary West's representations of the Orient (The current deluge of Raj nostalgia in the West, not least in the United States which had no colonial connections with India, can be seen from this point of view as part of a discursive formation that includes Union Carbide's defence of the gas leak in Bhopal. Inefficient natives and well-intentioned white rulers/multinational corporate executives feature in both representations)

It does not avail us much to state that *all* knowledge collaborates with power, the specific modes of that collaboration have to be detailed, as Said does in *Orientalism* in the case of Anglo-French involvement in the Middle East. Similarly much more detailed investigation is necessary to show that Britain's prescription of a desired knowledge *for* India is based upon its own diagnosis/knowledge *of* India, which in turn is inextricable from the project of imperialism. The imposition of English language and literature must be shown to be postulated upon a certain knowledge of, and for, the natives. Anglicists and Orientalists will then be seen as collaborators. The colonial project required both giving the ruler a patriotic sense of the possession of a great literature of his own, as well as impressing the native with the cultural superiority of the ruler. This double duty was achieved at a stroke by the introduction of English literature into school and college curricula in England and India. Has the ideology of this study changed? Can we continue to view this academic activity as an Orientalizing enterprise?

II

To answer these questions we must follow Said into his theoretical and political reflections upon "the text, the world, and the critic," and upon the nature of "opponents, audiences, constituencies, and community."

These reflections impinge upon Said's study of historical Orientalism. He notes that the beginnings of philology in the West coincide with the Higher Criticism, and in the person of Renan the two disciplines converge. What Renan did by designating the semitic religious texts (the Torah, the Koran, and the New Testament) as philologically "inferior," and therefore not of divine origin, was to replace God by the Orientalist. This was an enormous access of power, achieved by the textualist at a single stroke.¹⁸

Renan's achievement explodes "the fallacy of imagining the life of texts as being pleasantly ideal and without force or conflict"¹⁹ On the contrary, texts spring from "ethnocentrism and the erratic will to power,"²⁰ they are, as Nietzsche pointed out, "facts of power, not of democratic exchange."²¹

Just as the view that knowledge is disinterested seeking has its ideological support, so also, and for the same reasons, the materiality of the text, the fact of its *production*, is concealed. So great is the prestige of the book and the written word that it is placed above materiality. But Said stresses Marx's contention that discourse is systematically *produced*; it "is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures."²² The emergence of fields and disciplines is not a 'natural' phenomenon, but comes about as a result of prohibitions and sanctions. Since the text exercises such power, the most apt metaphor for the discursive situation is the colonizer-colonized relationship. Said quotes Stephen Dedalus' fretful recognition:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit.²³

There is also Naipaul's lament:

The vision was alien. It diminished my own and did not give me the courage to do a simple thing like mentioning the name of a Port of Spain street. . . It helps in the most practical way to have a tradition. . . the English language was mine, the tradition was not.

Our relationship with the text, as these writers show, is enmeshed with our historical position.

How do these notions of textuality and discourse serve our reading of the present situation of English literary studies in India?

Even if we take 'text' only in its most limited and restricted sense of the prescribed text in the classroom, we can see that for all the apparent randomness with which texts are picked for inclusion in a syllabus in a university, there is still a very tight circle drawn around the range of texts that are eligible for classroom study. The constitution of a syllabus (as of a field) consists as much of the *exclusion* of what does not belong to it as the inclusion of what does. The extremely purist notion of what goes into the field of literary studies has by and large kept out any non-English, contemporary or non-'literary' texts. Invariably the texts in an English literature course have canonical status. Canons, as Said reminds us, are not "an ideal cosmos of ideally equal poems," but "a system of forces institutionalized at some expense by the reigning culture."²⁴ The "reigning" or hegemonic authority is invariably the Western university whose influence upon all academic functioning in India, and, in particular, upon the teaching of English and American literatures, is very strong. Ideology inheres even in the forms of a structure, thus, as long as the unit of study is the 'text-book,' the methods that will best serve pedagogy (class-room

teaching, examinations, term papers) will continue to be explication, close reading, exegesis, text-and-context discussions in short, the whole New Critical, liberal-humanist methodology that has already proved pedagogically so viable in the Western university

Having recently been associated with a syllabus revision programme at my university, I have come to realize that no ideal notions of "excellence" or "suitability" determine the choice of texts. Rather, an immense and complex network of forces comes into play which includes such questions and considerations as:

(i) Who shall edit the work (select, provide notes etc.)? Upon such choice lies the fate of teacher for whom this editorial work will count as an academic 'publication'

(ii) Should a work be edited/chosen anew? Or should existing, readily-available, pre-edited works be chosen?

(iii) Will the inclusion of new courses displace other (non-English) courses? Will the dropping of existing courses lead to retrenchment of English teachers? How many classes a week, how many students, how many teachers, how many colleges are affected?

(iv) Will we teach language or literature, or language through literature?

What/whose literature?

(Translations are ruled out, and the "saturation" of students with English, "as in Max Muller Bhavan or the Alliance Francaise," or in the teaching of Asian immigrants to Britain, is recommended.)

(v) Teachers of undergraduate colleges (for whose students the courses are intended) have little more than recommendatory powers in the selection of texts. A massive hierarchical edifice consisting of the university post-graduate English department, a committee of courses made up of senior teachers, the Faculty of Arts, and the Academic Council exists to authorize a syllabus revision.

All these matters are laid out not for criticism (which is all too easily indulged in), but as an exposure of the actual power relations that obtain within the academic system in the prescription of texts for study.

The power structure of texts is an indication of their materiality, i.e., they are socially and economically determined. The most forceful proof of this characteristic is their commodity status. School and college textbooks are the publications with the highest guaranteed sales (the piratical publication of bazaar texts and notes is a major ancillary business). In a big Indian university there may well be close to twenty-five thousand students studying English in any given year. The presence of one text in the syllabus necessitates the displacement of another text. This exhibition of aggression and will to power is, as Said holds, an inherent characteristic of the text. In India foreign publishing firms have until recently virtually had monopoly over the publication of prescribed texts in English syllabi. Oxford University Press, Macmillans, Orient (!) Longmans, and now

Penguin, have found the market in India, chiefly the academic market, large enough, and the labour sufficiently cheap to set up their branches in India. They are also the most prestigious publishers of academic and scholarly work.

If we turn to English literary critical studies in India, we find that most Indian scholars produce their work at foreign universities (usually as doctoral dissertations), such work invariably reflects the specific conditions and reigning ideologies of those systems. Homi Bhabha, in a brief discussion of Third World literary critical practice, shows how even "nationalist" criticism works within the constraints of a hegemonic Leavisite ideology.²⁵ Also, to a very large extent English language and literary studies in India function under the aegis of two quasi-governmental foreign agencies, the British Council and the USIS. These organizations perceive English and American literatures as the cultural products of their respective countries and promote them accordingly. There exists therefore a well-established system of funding, grants, patronage, publications, libraries, centres for advanced studies, seminars and workshops that is administered by these institutions. Not surprisingly, literary criticism in India is defined by the very material conditions created by these organizations.

Speaking of a "politics of interpretation," Said demands a "methodological and disciplinary self-questioning," where "methodological" means "a questioning of the structure of fields and discourses themselves."²⁶ Said speaks of course of and from within the specific academic situation of Reagan's America. But we can see the same embroilment of academics within the circumstances of the production of texts and criticism in the English literary system in India. Having been constituted unproblematically as (lesser) members of the community of western readers of western texts, we find ourselves as critics (a) naturalised into the role of western-type critics (b) but suffering from a sense of inferiority or lack of worth as second-order critics (lacking in true language facility, sufficient scholarship etc.), and (c) experiencing a loss of natural identity and alienation from lived experience. If we were to consciously enter into a discursive relationship with the western text, we might be able to achieve an alienation from it that will enable us to treat it as the text of an alien culture, with behaviour patterns, literary traits, conventions and linguistic usage that require demystification and, at the very least, problematization. To thus lodge the text within the confines of a western discourse would be to deny its implicit claims to universality.

A significant change to a specifically Third World perspective on the colonial text requires more: it calls for a radical politicization of English literary studies, both pedagogical and critical, in India.

IV

'Learn your letters. They're not enough, but still learn them.'

'Grab hold of the book, you hungry one. It's a weapon'

—Bertolt Brecht, in *The Mother* ²⁷

I want to explore in this section, with great tentativeness and some trepidation, some ways in which the Indian teacher of English literature might enter into relationship with the Western text in his own work as a critic, as well as in the classroom

Said's work is an example of the most obvious project the Third World academic can undertake, the critique of the imperialist ideology of the first-world text. Said's post-structuralist epistemology—the dethroning of the primacy of the knowing subject, the analysis of discourse, the collusion of knowledge with power—seems to be particularly empowering for this project. But we observe also the happy results of the Marxist-deconstructionist methodology employed by subaltern historians in India, and the fruitful feminist-deconstructionist-psychoanalytical tools deployed by Gayatri Spivak. The critiquing of post-colonial discourse, it already becomes apparent, is done "with the best tools that it can *itself* provide" [emphasis mine] Spivak argues further. "I am . . . far from averse to learning from the work of Western theorists, although I have also learned to insist upon marking their positionality as indeed the positionality of any investigating subject." She warns against the simple substitution of the "lost figure of the colonized": "Part of our 'unlearning' project is to articulate that ideological formation [of a 'monolithic Third World Woman'] into our object of investigation" ²⁸ Clearly the critique of colonial discourse is a challenging and far from easy enterprise

The dangers have to be recognized at the outset. It is all too easy to proceed from our awareness of our historically—and ideologically—enshrined colonialist relationship to English literature, to a search for "roots" and origins and the recovery of a "lost" native tradition. Such a simple either/or alternative seeking can be misleading. We are historically constituted to the extent of not being able to afford "self-marginalisation" (the phrase is Spivak's), by alienating ourselves from all Western knowledge. More crucially, in our country and in the present political conditions, nationalistic anti-imperialism takes the form of a particularly violent Hindu revivalism whose backlash is generally felt by the nation's minority communities. We can only erect for ourselves a kind of distant, privileged, and bric-a-brac relationship with Western theory in our critical cultural projects

The third possibility—and danger—is the kind of "synthesis" found and celebrated by David Kopf in the work of such national Indian figures as Vivekananda, Keshab Chandra, and Ram Mohun Roy or Tagore's fictional Gora who plumps for a kind of "universal humanism" in the face of the discovery of his white identity ²⁹ The term "synthesis," I would suggest, is used to suggest a more-or-less amicable adjustment of different ideas. In place of this reconciliation, we might diagnose and support a

subversive relationship between the Indian nationalist intellectual and western literature. The liberal-humanist plank of the nationalist movement was created by such individuals as Nehru who would use Burke, Macaulay or Toynbee against the ruler—just as Gandhi showed up the subversive possibilities of the Sermon on the Mount. “Literature in the broader sense” has always been, after all, “a powerful source of knowledge, of history, and hence of challenge and resistance.” Working-class readers, these critics go on to point out, have always found in Dickens, say, “an answering anger and a powerful laughter.”³¹ It is in this sense that the Indian intelligentsia that constituted the elite of the nationalist movement turned the knowledge of English culture forced upon them into an effective tool for argument, resistance and subversion. Needless to say, we have long since ceased to make such strategic use of our enforced knowledge, and have slid into passive consumerism.

A final speculation is offered on the Indian reader and the Western text. In a recent essay upon the authority of the English “book,” Homi Bhabha discusses the forms of ambivalence created in that authority by a native response marked by “camouflage, mimicry, black skins/white masks.”³² By seeking out moments of subaltern resistance, often covert, we might “even seek to change the often coercive reality that they [the words of the master] so lucidly contain.”³³ Such a project seems well in tune with his own work. He narrates the tale of Anund Messeh, an early Indian missionary, who seeks to explain the Bible to a group of natives. The natives proceed to question and argue with Anund Messeh, and then promise that they will “perhaps” be baptized “next year” since “now we must go home to the harvest.” Bhabha reads in this tale the drama of the destabilization of authority, and the beginning of a “specific colonial appropriation” of the Book.³⁴

We ourselves, as academics, do not dare to make such an appropriation. Perhaps what we see in our classroom of our students’ responses to “the book”—the canonical English literary text—can be read in the light of the parable of Anund Messeh, as such appropriation.

Confronted by the double authority of the book itself and the English teacher endorsing and buttressing it by painful explication, they read and listen patiently in the classroom. Then they go back to the colourfully translated Hindi version of the text in a crib and memorize the “proper” answers from the same source, thus making both text and teacher redundant; or they improvise in halting English their expressions of sympathy for Desdemona and Joe Keller and make clear their incomprehension at original sin, and contribute their own malapropisms to an account of Mrs. Malaprop’s “contribution to the humour of the play.”³⁵

To be Anund Messeh is to be cast in the role of the colonial subject as teacher/translator/mediator and to have no share in either colonial authority or colonial resistance. It is time to confront the text by

displacing the author-function and asking instead Foucault's questions :

What are the modes of existence of this discourse ? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself ? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects ? Who can assume these various subject-functions ?³⁸

This is the exercise Said has initiated in *Orientalism*.

1. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London and Henley Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. All further references are to this edition, and page numbers are indicated in the text.
2. *Master Discourse, Native Informant* is the name of a forthcoming book by Gayathri Chakravarty Spivak, Columbia University Press
3. Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1983), Chapter 3, "A Civilizing Subject," provides a complete picture of the beginnings of this movement.
4. Janet Batsleer et al, *Rewriting English : Cultural Politics, Gender and Class* London and New York Methuen & Co, 1985, p. 23
5. David Kopf, "Hermeneutics Versus History," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No 3, May 1980, pp 495-506.
- 6 Kopf, p 500.
7. Kopf, p. 501.
- 8 Kopf, p. 502
9. Lata Mani, "The Production of an Official Discourse on *Sati* in Early Nineteenth Century Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XXI, No 17 (April 26, 1986), Review of Women Studies, p 32
- 10 A A Wilson, an Orientalist at Oxford Quoted in Kopf, p 505.
- 11 Kopf, p 504
12. John Mill and Macaulay respectively Quoted in Kopf, p. 504
13. Gerold and Natalie Robinson Surkin, "The Battle of Indian Education Macaulay's Opening Salvo Newly Discovered," *Victorian Studies* 14 (1971), 409-11 These authors, it may be pointed out, also unproblematically accept the equation of "Useful Knowledge" with "Western learning," and both with the use of the English language.
14. Gayathri Chakravarty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory*, Vol XXIV, No 3 (1985), p 264
15. See Raymond Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880* Translated by Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York Columbia University Press, 1984), First published 1950
16. David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1969).
17. Edward Said, Introduction to *Oriental Renaissance*, reprinted from *Daedalus* (Winter 1976), Vol 105, No. 1
- 18 Edward Said, "The Text, the World, the Critic," in Josue V Harari ed. *Textual Strategies Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (London : Methuen & Co, 1980), p. 180.
19. *Ibid*,
20. *Ibid*, p. 184
21. *Ibid*, p. 178.
22. *Ibid*, p. 181
- 23 James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York : Viking, 1964), p. 189 Quoted in "The Text, the World, the Critic," p. 182.

24. "The Text, the World, the Critic," p. 186
25. Homi Bhabha, "Representation and the Colonial Text A Critical Exploration of Some Forms of Mimeticism," in Frank Gloversmith ed. *Theory of Reading* (Sussex · Harvester Press, 1964)
26. Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (September 1982), p. 16
27. London · Eyre Methuen, 1978 Quoted in Batsleer, p. 37.
28. "Can the Subaltern Speak ? Speculations on Widow-Sacrifice," *Wedge* 7/8 (Winter/Spring, 1985), p. 120
- 29 Kopf, pp. 497-98
- 30 Batsleer, p 37
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Homi Bhabha, "Signs taken for Wonders Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Autumn 1985). p 162.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Bhabha, "Signs etc ," p 161
35. These references are to texts in the Delhi University Pass Course English syllabus, *Othello, All My Sons, Lord of the Flies, The Rivals*
36. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author ?" in *Textual Strategies*, p 160

KALPANA SAHNI*

Oriental Phantoms

F. Dostoevsky's views on the East

"The great eagle of the Orient will revolt and the Western islanders will start weeping. It will seize three kingdoms and fly to the south in order to retrieve that which has been lost. And God will shower love and mercy on the Oriental eagle for its task is difficult. Its two wings will glitter over the heights of Christianity."¹

THIS quotation from Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer* is remarkable in more ways than one. In the first place it is an excellent example for research scholars on how not to quote! Dostoevsky took this quotation from a sixteenth century book of Prognostics by Johannis Lichtenberger, a German. The Russian writer decided that the great eagle had to be from the Orient—so he decided, on his own, to incorporate the words "of the Orient" in the first sentence. The other sentences were taken from different parts of the book and made to seem one coherent whole! And not just that. In this long quotation (parts of which I have left out) Dostoevsky decided to correct Lichtenberger's prophecies.²

The other, far more important aspect of this quotation for us is in that it reveals Dostoevsky's religious and political views in the last decade of his life. Expressions like "love" and "mercy" stand alongside "seize" and "revolt". He sees Russia's mission (for that is the great eagle of the Orient) in the name of Christianity, as a saviour and simultaneously a conquerer. The conquest that is being implied is that of Constantinople at the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877.

But why does Dostoevsky make it a point to equate Russia with "the Orient"? Only by clarifying this term in its historical context can we understand the writer's stand and the influences that moulded it.

The East-West division was brought about in the 5th century A.D. and pertained to the division of the church, the East being the Orthodox church and the West—the Catholic. By the 17th century this split had widened. The west was the Greco-Roman Christian world as opposed to the East which included countries from Turkey to China. (Today we are seeing

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yet another questionable division made by the West—the First, Second and Third World Countries). Thus, when Johannis Lichtenberger's book appeared the Orient, or the East, still related primarily to those nations which had adopted the Orthodox church—and Russia was one of them. This outlook remained in the European consciousness even at the time of Dostoevsky

The connotation of 'Oriental' gradually changed and became applicable to the Asian colonies of the European nations. The vast body of 'research' into any and every aspect of the East became known as Orientalism. And because this field developed side by side with the expansion of colonialism, no aspect of Orientalist studies is devoid of political undertones for it is "a formidable structure of cultural domination"³ Needless to say, the English and the French were the pioneers in this field. Although the colonisers could not shut their eyes to the East's enormous cultural heritage, it was the European yardstick that was used to measure it and pronounce judgements on it. Orientalism became "a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things"⁴ Armed as they were with a monotheistic religion, a Cartesian logic and the Renaissance concept of man's supremacy over nature the European colonisers could not comprehend India's polytheism of over 3000 gods, a holistic view of man and nature, all of which dictated the aesthetics, art and philosophy of this country. India had to have one holy book akin to the Bible. Frantic efforts in this direction ultimately led to the translation of one chapter from the Indian epic, *the Mahabharata*, *the Bhagawata Gita* and pass it off to the West as the Indian Bible—a belief held to this day by many in Europe (Imagine a chapter of the *Iliad* or *The Odyssey* being used for similar purposes). What could not be understood had to be explained—and not just explained but expounded with a feeling of condescension and superiority, i.e. from a position of strength.

"The West is the actor the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behaviour"⁵ The attitude of England and France towards the Middle and Near East, though fundamentally the same, was of a slightly different nature. For one thing Islam was geographically adjacent to Europe and always stood as a more direct challenge, whether militarily, politically or intellectually. Islam, a syncretic religion incorporating elements of Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, was monotheistic. The religious war of *jihad* launched by Islam was comparable to the Crusades. The Europeans could not come to terms with the territorial expansion of 'this heretic faith', Islam, in the middle ages. (A century after Mohammed's death the Islamic empire extended from Spain to China). Thus, both fear and demigration of Eastern barbarity and cruelty⁶ intermingled in European works pertaining to the Middle East whereas one's own were glossed over.⁷

We now turn our attention to nineteenth century Russia. Peter the Great's "window to Europe" ushers in a century of European culture, including philosophy, literature and art into Russia. Russia gets rapidly

Europeanized. Aristotelian poetics, Cartesian logic and Hegelian dialectics become an integral part of Russian thinking just as the writings of Rousseau, Goethe or Byron. "Oriental themes" with their flavour of the exotic, the unknown and the 'primitive' find their way into the works of the Romantics in an attempt to rid themselves of the rigidity of Neo-classicist rules. Pushkin follows in the footsteps of his mentor, Byron, by turning to the Orient (the Circassians in *The Prisoner of Caucasus*, *The Gypsies*, *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*). The Caucasus and its people are depicted by Lermontov. Zhukovsky's search into the nature of ideal love leads him to translate *Nala and Damayanti*, one story from the *Mahabharata*, in 1844.

The Russian intelligentsia had access to the English, French and German works in the original. A point worth noting here is that most works on Orientalism to be initially translated into Russian were from the above mentioned languages. The first translation of the *Bhagawata Gita* and the *Koran* into Russian in the 18th century was done from English and French respectively. Washington Irving's English rendering of the *Koran* was translated into Russian in 1857. Russian Orientalist studies came up much later, i.e. in the latter half of the 19th century. Thus, initial Russian attitudes to the Orient were, to a large extent, predetermined by those of the French and English and later, German. "This examination of things Oriental", so succinctly put forward by Edward Said, "was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign western consciousness."⁸

European nationalism and a supercilious attitude towards the Eastern cultural heritage mark V. Belinsky's review of Zhukovsky's translation of the Indian tale, *Nala and Damayanti*. European yardsticks of aesthetics are applied to an alien culture about which the Russian critic is misinformed. While acknowledging the need for such translations, Belinsky adds: "For us Europeans this poetry is interesting as a fact of the primitive world, but we cannot sympathize with its superstition and ugly poetics."⁹ He further maintains: "The individual is the base of the European spirit for whom, therefore, man is above nature."¹⁰ There is an ironical twist here. The Russian intellectual thinks like a European, sees himself as one and yet is not a European for the Europeans. The Russian critic was misinformed about India and Indians who, for him, were "a great tribe", believing in an amorphous matter which destroys man's individuality.¹¹ It was more natural for Belinsky, given his background, to look upon *The Iliad* as the cradle song of civilization.

More than ten years later another Russian critic, N. Dobrolyubov, in his article on *The East India Company* shares many of the English and French attitudes to India. Attempts at objective appraisals (as in the above case and in Dobrolyubov's review of the *Koran*) end up with the repetition of a colonial mentality.¹²

European attitudes towards the Orient were also more readily acceptable to the Russians because of their close encounter with the

Mongol Tartars who ruled over Russia for over two and a half centuries (13th—15th A D) Fear and hatred intermingle in the Russian mind towards the conquerers With time this feeling encompasses Islam which the Mongol-Tartars adopt. Nowhere are these sentiments more in evidence than in the Russian language Given below are some examples of it from Dal's dictionary

Tartar—dishonest, cunning, sly

Poganyı (rascal)—infidel, Jew, Muslim etc

Poganit' (verb)—to pollute

Asian—inhabitant of Asia (a swear word), rude, uneducated person

Asiatic—savage, crude

Mohammed—(a swear word in the Don region), a thief, swindler, scoundrel

With the gradual rise of the Russian Empire and the simultaneous weakening of various Asian countries this feeling of might and disdain became more and more ingrained If 15th century Russia still bowed before the might of the Ottoman Empire and sought permission to use the Black Sea for navigational purposes and trade, 18th century Russia wrenched the Crimean peninsula from the Turks and felt it was its right to do so The expansionist policy, primarily eastwards and southwards, initiated by Ivan III, was successfully pursued by all subsequent rulers. By the end of the 19th century Russian rule extended to Siberia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirghizia and Turkmenia in Central Asia, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the South, Poland, Finland and Lithuania in the West Russia became a formidable colonial power to be reckoned with. Its colonial interests were to constantly clash with those of France and England In the 19th century this bone of contention was primarily centred round the Dardanelles Russia's repeated attempts at gaining an outlet into the Mediterranean met with a strong resistance from France and England The scene of the war was Turkey and its domains, a weak Turkey and which had been turned into an economic vassal of France and England, both intent on dismembering it.

It is against this backdrop that one should approach Dostoevsky's views on the East, which, in the latter years, were concerned primarily with Turkey and the Russo-Turkish War The quotation cited at the beginning of the paper highlights the contradictions which Dostoevsky shared with some of the leading Russian intellectuals of the 19th century

Prior to his arrest in 1849 Dostoevsky's references to the East are confined to a few stray remarks neutral in character That is because the writer shows no particular interest in the Orient In the story, *The Double* :

Golyadkin recalls the Arab emirs, their green turbans, which they wear as a sign of their relationship to Mohammed, the Prophet . . . from there his thoughts shifted to the Turks and Turkish sandals¹³.

In another place in the same story :

Golyadkin-senior noted that in some way the Turks are correct when they call out to God even in their sleep. Later, disagreeing with the slander of various erudite men against the Turkish Prophet, Mohammed, he recognises him to be, in his own way, a great politician.¹⁴

Dostoevsky, in passing, mentions the Indian boa constrictor (*The Double*) and the Arabian Thousand and one Nights Tales (*A Foul Joke*). It is only after his release from penal servitude that references to Turkey and to the Prophet Mohammed start occupying a more prominent place in the writer's works. Dostoevsky was familiar with the French version of *the Koran* which he read in Semiplatinsk (where he served after his release from the Omsk prison, from 1855—1856). References to Mohammed are made in *Crime and Punishment* where the Prophet is equated with Napoleon and Caesar—the super men, who stop at nothing to achieve their aims. Mohammed's epileptic fits feature in the novels *Idiot*, *The Possessed*, *The Raw Youth*. However, nowhere more forcefully are Dostoevsky's views on Islam, Turkey and the Orient expressed as in his *Diaries of a Writer* of 1876, 1877, 1881 and in his last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

What a change in the tone ! Gone is the neutrality that characterises his earlier works. Pages devoted to "The Eastern Question", to Turkey, its people and religion exude an intense feeling of hatred. For Dostoevsky now the Turks are "profane Hagarite Mohammedans" (*Diary of a Writer*, 1877) or else "this savage, vile Muslim horde, a sworn sworn enemy of civilization". There is even a wish "that these blood-sucker Turks break their necks". As though such adjectives were insufficient the writer goes into minute details on the sadistic tortures the Bulgarians were subjected to by the Turks. These scenes seem to haunt Dostoevsky so much that he keeps reverting back to them. They finally culminate in the *Pro and Contra* chapters of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In the most poignant passage of the novel where Ivan Karamazov puts the question whether universal harmony should be achieved at the price of a single child's tears—Dostoevsky enumerates an entire range of atrocities perpetrated by adults against children. Children are shown being tortured by their own parents, by feudal landlords, by society. Amongst these are pages devoted to Turkish soldiers fondling a babe in arms, throwing the laughing child into the air and then, in the presence of the mother, catching the falling baby on the edge of a razor thin bayonet. And Alyosha, who epitomises the Christian ideal of love and mercy, on hearing all this, is compelled to call for revenge. One might have not taken note of the scenes on Turkish atrocities had it been confined to this novel. One can also argue that Dostoevsky attempted to show different types of torture and this was only one of them. True. But there are questions which continue to bother. How is it that in this very novel in which a whole chapter is devoted to the Spanish Inquisition which was no less barbaric—there is

no mention of its heinous crimes. If this question is considered inappropriate for it attempts to intrude into a creative writer's laboratory of work, then one must revert back to his *Diaries* where Dostoevsky, like a man possessed, is propagating aggression against Turkey. He is confident that Constantinopol is going to be captured by Russia and the Turks taught a lesson.

How is one to approach this radical change in Dostoevsky's outlook to that of the earlier years? The seeds of this change are to be found in one of the few poems written by the writer, *On the European Events of 1854*.

The Russo-Turkish war of 1854 in which Britain and France sided with Turkey was viewed by Dostoevsky as a betrayal of the civilized nations.

The Christian siding with the Turk against Christ.
The Christian—a defender of Mohammed.
Shame on you—apostates of the cross.¹⁵

It is here that Dostoevsky, for the first time clearly states that the East (the Orient) will be taken over by Russia.

It is not for you to decide Russia's fate.
The East—is hers! To her are hands outstretched
Untiringly by a million generations.
And ruling over the ancient Asia
She gives to all a new life.
And renaissance to the ancient Orient . . .¹⁶

Russia's expansionist policy is justified. The messianic role of Russia guided by "the cross, the faith and the throne" is also put forward for the first time. Over the years these ideas get crystallised in Dostoevsky's works.

Simultaneously, they are closely linked with the writer's private search for answers that were tormenting him. While in prison Dostoevsky realised the enormous abyss lying between the intellectuals and the masses. He began to question his utopian-socialist past. The onslaught of capitalism in Russia with all the socio-economic contradictions ensuing thereafter such as the moral depravity of the 'haves' and the poverty, misery and humiliation suffered by the 'have nots' forced Dostoevsky to seek fresh answers to social, ethical and philosophical problems. He attempted to rid himself of his youthful radicalism and Western ideas and find salvation in the Russian Orthodox church and the simple Russian folk. He starts believing in absolute monarchy and nationalism. But it is one thing to turn one's back on one's past and quite another to be rid of it when it has become so much a part of one's being. Speaking about one's beliefs the narrator in *Memories from the House of the Dead* says that one "has suffered so much in life for them and paid such a heavy price to attain

them that it is practically impossible to break away from them."¹⁷ Thus, this inner contradiction between his earlier beliefs and those of the later period (portrayed and voiced so brilliantly through his characters in his novels) will run parallel in the writer's fiction of this period. The Christian concept of love, compassion, mercy and suffering are counterposed to violence and a revolutionary overthrow of power. A European sensibility clashes with Russian nationalism. But if in his novels Dostoevsky, one of the most honest writers, identifies with most of his heroes and allows for a polyphonic discourse that shows different paths to salvation, in his political writings, Dostoevsky the arch nationalist takes over.

Religion so totally engulfs him that the writer ceases to objectively view reality. And it is here that all the latent views of the Orient emerge. Russia in the war against Turkey in 1877 is seen as a saviour of the Slav people still under the yoke of Turkey. The war assumes the proportions of a crusade. Dostoevsky becomes more and more intolerant of non-Christian peoples and nations. The decision by the Russian Government to forcibly evict the Crimean Tartars is fully approved by the writer, who fears that if the Russians do not move in it will be the Jews.¹⁸ (his antisemitic leanings are well known).

There is another paradox. A constant feeling of condescension is apparent when the writer speaks of liberating the Bulgarians and uniting all the Slavs into one brotherhood. Dostoevsky imagines that "for the Slavs . . . Russia is still the sun, the hope, their friend, mother, protectress and their future liberator"¹⁹ He sees Russia heading the Pan Slav movement.

The role for which Russia was destined from the time of Ivan III when he chose the two headed eagle* as the coat-of-arms, was that of the leader of Orthodox Christianity—its guardian and protector.²⁰

All the Slavs will be united "under the wings of Russia." Edward Said has very aptly pointed out that "nearly every nineteenth century writer was extraordinarily well aware of the fact of the empire"²¹ Although this quotation is applied to the French and English experience it is just as relevant for the Russian writers. The feeling of supremacy towards smaller nations, the fight for more democratization and freedom at home and its inapplicability to those nations seeking independence from Russian subjugation—these attitudes exist not just in Dostoevsky but in his predecessors as well, like Pushkin and Lermontov.²² The annexation policy of the czarist government is justified by these writers.

In 1881 after fierce resistance Turkmenia, along with the town of Ashkhabad, fell to the Russians. Dostoevsky enters into polemics with those who are decrying the Government's Asiatic policy and feel that

*It is doubtful that Dostoevsky was aware of the fact that the symbol of the two-headed eagle used widely as the coat of arms of both European and Russian kings is an ancient Sumerian symbol. The Europeans adopted it from the Arabs at the time of the Crusades.

those very funds should be utilised for the improvement of one's own economy. The writer is jubilant at the success of the Russian expedition. In fact, Dostoevsky feels that Russia should have moved Eastwards much earlier, after the Napoleonic War. In the colonization of the East lies Russia's future, according to him.

Let the conviction grow in the minds of these millions of people right up to India, in fact, even in India, of the white Czar's invincibility and his unconquerable sword . . . These people might have their own Khans and Emirs. England's power might astound them . . . but the white Czar must stand above the Khans, the emirs, the Indian Empress and even above that of the Caliph's. Let him be the Caliph but the white Czar is the Czar to the Caliph as well. This type of conviction must be ingrained in them! And it is being ingrained and growing with every passing year. This is necessary for us because it prepares them for the future.²³

For the writer Russia's colonization of the Orient is seen as a mission which carries civilization to those countries and "By capturing Asia our spirits and strength will lift. In Europe we were hangers on whereas in Asia we will arrive as masters."²⁴

There were moments when the writer seemed to understand objective realities²⁵ but they were far overshadowed by his religious fanaticism, chauvinistic nationalism and an unfounded hatred of the Orient. Without perhaps realising it Dostoevsky became the staunchest supporter of the Russian government's expansionist policy of the Orient and, like many before him, sniggered at the culture and civilizations of these nations. What a contrast this is to the stand taken by a contemporary of his, Lev Tolstoy! In fact, Dostoevsky vehemently criticised the epilogue of *Anna Karenina* in which Tolstoy ridicules and questions the zeal displayed by volunteers of the Russo-Turkish War "to free the Slavs".

Tolstoy's search, similar in many ways to that of Dostoevsky's, about the meaning of life led him to a broader understanding of reality. The study of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, the teachings of Confucius and Lao Tse made him more tolerant towards other nations and peoples. If Dostoevsky's political writings made him turn more and more nationalistic, those of Tolstoy opened his eyes to the common features inherent in every despotic and oppressive regime. For Dostoevsky the czar was the saviour, for Tolstoy he was "the Chingiz Khan with telegraphs, a constitution, a press and political parties. This "Chingiz Khan along with his well-mannered, courteous and clean murderers",²⁶ in the name of Christianity, was engaged in plunder, wars and crimes which he was justifying. Tolstoy realised that there was no difference between any of the Russian czars, of Napoleon, Gladstone or Palmerston. "The forms of oppression had changed but not disappeared". A despotic rule, its cruelty was the same everywhere—be it in the torture of innocent Poles by Russian soliders or that of Chingiz Khan.

Countries and Governments carry out intrigues and wars because

of property : the shores of the Rheme, land in Africa, China and in the Balkan Peninsula.²⁷

If Dostoevsky was urging the government to conquer Asia, Tolstoy was decrying the heinous crime being committed by the invasion of China in 1900 by eight countries (England, France, USA, Russia, Japan, Austro-Hungary, Germany, Italy.) Tolstoy's pain for the oppressed colonial nations and his sympathies with their struggle was not shared by Dostoevsky. And for this reason one can say that if Tolstoy was successful in overcoming the prevalent Orientalist approach of his times Dostoevsky turned a prey to "Oriental Phantoms".

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1. F.M Dostoevskii, *Dnevnik pisatelya za 1877 god, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Nauka, Leningrad, Vol. 25, pp. 122-123
2. *Ibid*, p. 412
3. Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p. 25
4. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
5. *Ibid*, p. 109.
6. Voltaire "One Latin and one Greek priest informed that Mohammed II allowed the whole of Constantinopol to be ransacked, that he personally broke the image of Jesus Christ and converted all the churches into Mosques In order to make the conqueror seem even more repulsive they added that the Sultan . beheaded his mistress and ordered the stomachs of fourteen of his pashas to be slit open in order to ascertain which one of them had eaten a water-melon. Hundreds of historians are repeating these pathetic untruths. Turn to the Turkish chronicles which merit trust . . and you will see how ridiculous are all these fairy tales" In F Ya Prima, *Russkaya literatura na Zapade*. Nauka, Lenin-grad, 1970, p. 27.
7. Philip K. Hitti quotes Arabic sources on the Crusades and their attack on Jerusalem in 1099 "The besiegers stormed the city and perpetrated an indiscriminate massacre involving all ages and both sexes 'Heaps of heads and hands and feet were to be seen throughout the streets and squares of the city" (Agiles, p. 659) In the book Philip K Hitti. *History of the Arabs*. Macmillan, 1985. p. 639.
8. Edward W Said *op. cit* p. 8
9. V G. Belinskii *Retsenzi i zametki, yanvar'-mart 1844*. Nal'i Damayanti. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Akademii Nauk, Moscow 1955, vol 8 p 113.
10. *Ibid*. p. 113.
11. *Ibid*.
12. Dobrolyubov attempts an objective appraisal of the reasons for the 1157 revolt in India but because his thinking is conditioned along European lines and most of his source material is French, he falls a prey to oriental attitudes "India has not changed since the time of Alexander " (P 9) He praises English enlightenment and its efforts to educate the masses who, by their very nature are "lazy." Indians are not ready for English humaneness nor for adopting Christianity etc. In . N.A. Dobrolyubov *Vzglyad na istoriyu i sovremennoe sostoyanie ost-Indii. Sobranie sochinenii. Khudozhestvennaya literatura*. Moscow, 1962, vol 2 This concept of the lazy Oriental is once again repeated in Dobrolyubov's article. *Zhizn' Magometa*. *Ibid*.

- 13 F M. Dostoevskii, *Dvoimik*, *op cit.* vol. 1 p. 135
- 14 *Ibid* p 158
- 15 Na Evropeiskie sobytiya v 1854 godu *Ibid* vol 2. p. 405.
- 16 *Ibid*
- 17 Zapiski iz mertvogo doma *Ibid* vol. 4, p 216.
- 18 Dnevnik pisatelya za 1876 god. *Ibid* vol 23. p. 54-55.
- 19 *Ibid* p 115
- 20 *Ibid* p 49.
21. Edward W Said *op cit* p 14
- 22 Pushkin opposed the Polish revolt of 1831 in his poem. *Reply to the Slandereers of Russia* (Klevetnikam Rossii), *Anniversary of Borodino and in his letters* of 1830-31 Lermontov, in his poem *Mtsyry*, while glorifying the freedom loving Georgians, simultaneously adds that the Russian take over of Georgia was God sent See also his poems *Opyat' narodnye vityi*
- 23 F Dostoevskii, Dnevnik pisatelya za 1881 god *op cit.* vol 27 pp 32-33
24. *Ibid* p 36
- 25 Dostoevsky sees the "Eastern question" as a game between nations-five wolves on their haunches each ready to pounce on the bone of connection, Constantinopol (Dnevnik pisatelya za 1876 god) In 1854 the writer had wholeheartedly agreed, as he himself admits, with Granovsky's article on the Russo-Turkish War of 1855 Granovsky had pointed out that Russia's politics towards the Slav nations had been one of capture and subjugation In 1876 Dostoevsky refutes these charges and feels that Russia's aims are fair. Dnevnik pisatelya za 1876 god
- 26 L.N Tolstoi Pora ponyat' . In *Sobranie sochinenii v 20 tomakh Khudozhestvennaya literatura*, Moscow 1964. vol 16, p 569
- 27 L N Tolstoi *Rabstvo nashego vremeni* vol. 16 p 399.

SİBEL BOZDOĞAN*

Orientalism And Architectural Culture

WHEN A PROMINENT Turkish architect wholeheartedly declared that "he too, has started making domes and arches"¹ he was only expressing what can perhaps be seen as the "Islamic Revival" of the last decade in architectural culture at large. The Western architectural world—its media, publications and exhibitions—is visibly permeated by an Islamic discourse, particularly heightened after the inception of the Aga Khan Awards Programme and the publication of *Mimar* in the early 1980s.

This renewed interest in Islamic architecture demands cautious evaluation since it has a two sided implication. On one hand, it represents an unprecedented platform of discussion for a *non-Western transition to modernity*. By encouraging research and theorizing, it marks the possibility of *authentic* theory for cultures 'peripheral' to the Western world.² This possibility operates within a *history/modernity problematique*. It perceives modernity not as a Western category, but as a more or less universal set of problems to which there can be different, authentic responses, dislocated in time and place.

On the other hand, the interest in Islamic architecture also represents the possibility of further imagery at the disposal of an architectural culture of pluralism and consumerism—an imagery which is particularly marketable for rich Islamic clients. This possibility operates within an *East/West problematique* representing the East at the level of imagery. The products often end up as western 'commodities' with Eastern 'wrapping' to be sold to the East. (I have to note that I am using "East" and "West" in quotation marks because it is precisely these words that I would like to question as discursive categories)

Here, I primarily wish to expose the cultural roots and background of the second attitude which I connect to the phenomenon of Orientalism. The term came to be widely used particularly after Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism*, 1978. The book is a major intellectual contribution rigorously posing the problems of the East/West problematique, in fact, of any form of polarity thinking which, in many cases, obscures the actual complexity of the picture. It is therefore appropriate to first outline the main arguments of the book and look historically at the scope and status of the

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“orient” for the Western world. The second part, will then focus up on specific Orientalist undercurrents in architectural culture, from the Enlightenment onwards to its current implications for the “post-modern condition”.

Orientalism As A Form Of Discourse

It is interesting to note how “the East and the West” have acquired many different and not always overlapping connotations based on geographical, cultural, religious or political definitions

Raymonds Williams, in his *Keywords*, traces the East/West distinction to the division of the Roman Empire in the 4th century, after which the division between the Western Church (i.e catholic) and the Eastern (i.e orthodox) has become sharper. In the 16th and the 17th centuries, with the development of systematic geography in Europe, the West becomes the Christian Greco-Roman world in contrast to an East or “Orient” covering the lands from the Mediterranean to India and China. From this period onwards, even the terms ‘near’, ‘middle’ and ‘far’ East bear testimony to the prevailing Europe-centered perspective.

The transition from the Middle Ages to Modernity—the succession of Renaissance, Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment—has decisively installed Western self-confidence, based on the “decline versus progress” thesis: i. e. the view that European civilization represented the historical category of progress, vis a vis other cultures long past their golden ages and now in a state of stagnation and decline. Equipped with such philosophical legitimation, Europe could then proceed with her enterprise to study, represent, restructure and ultimately intervene with what was beyond herself. The West versus the Rest, i.e. Europe versus all of Asia, Africa, Far East and the Americas came to be the dominant mental framework, within which however, the specific status of Islam demands attention. That the word Orient is often taken to be synonymous with the Islamic Orient needs to be historically and culturally explained. In his essay, “Islam and the Philosophers of History”³, Albert Hourani exposes how Islam has always been “a major fact of European history”, geographically adjacent to it and always presenting a challenge whether philosophical, military or political. In fact, Orientalism as a branch of research and study is frequently explained in connection to this challenge: as a desire to be familiar with the threatening element. Edward Said says: “the same is true of the methods of contemporary learned Orientalists whose subject is not so much the East itself, as the East made known and therefore less fearsome to the Western reading public.”⁴ And it was again this challenge which, in the Middle Ages, prompted Western scholars and monks to study Islam, to translate texts from Arabic etc. (such as, for instance, the case of Peter the Venerable, the abbot of Cluny, who initiated

the Study of Koran in Medieval Europe).

What is important for the case of the Middle Ages is, as Hourani discusses in detail, the *philosophical and theological* nature of the challenge that Islam presented to the Western mind preoccupied with such questions: How could the victory and the territorial expansion of Islam be explained if Christianity was the true revelation? How could a heretical faith acquire such power? How should the Christians interpret this in the Providential order of the world? This, not surprisingly, is the most lively period of Islamic philosophy and science, with the names of Averroes and Avicenna particularly prominent in the Western world. From the time of Reformation onwards, there is a decisive turning point, with the challenge shifting from the philosophical/theological realm into the *military*:

"The claim and doctrines of Islam were no longer a threat to the Christian faith now that the faith had come to terms with Greek philosophy and created intellectual defences. Islam was no longer a heresy which was likely to win supporters, nor an intellectual attack against which serious defence was necessary. Christians might be frightened of the Ottomen army, but they could look at the religion whose banner it carried with cool detachment if not with contempt."⁵

Islam was no longer the work of devil, but a historical phenomenon the causes and nature of which could be rationally discussed. In other words, with Islam brought down to earth and reconstructed as an object of cool and detached study, the grounds for Orientalism, in the sense that Said defines it, were set.

As a final note to this West versus Islam problematique, I would like to mark that the West versus the Turks is a relevant subset of Orientalism, precisely because of what Hourani said, i.e. the Turks representing the *mutant* Islam on the borders of Europe, particularly in the aftermath of two events: the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and the siege of Vienna in the 16th and 17th centuries. How the *image* of the Turk has become a part of European culture is a topic in its own right, extending from Martin Luther's views about the Turks (as a punishment sent by Providence to the corruption of the Christian world) to various "Turkish fashions" (epitomized by Mozart's "Abduction from the Seraglio" in 1787).

After this brief discussion of the scope and status of the Orient for the West, we can look at the way Edward Said poses the difficult question of *cross-cultural representation*, i.e. how a culture is perceived, described and ultimately reconstructed by another, often gravely reducing, schematizing and distorting "the image" according to the predilections of "the beholder". The book argues that Orientalism is not merely a specific area of research and scholarship installed in Western academia in the 19th century, but a broader concept: a form of discourse whereby the East is "reconstructed" verbally and visually, in the texts and imagery of Western

travellers, scholars, poets, ambassadors, merchants and adventurers. The Orient is almost a European invention", says Said, "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences". Himself being a professor of comparative literature, Said particularly concentrates on the texts of Flaubert, Chateaubriand, Lane ("Modern Egyptians"), Nerval ("Voyage on Orient"), Silvestre de Sacy and Ernst Renan. Without going into the details of his material, I would like to outline the major points in Said's argument.

Explicitly acknowledging his intellectual indebtedness to Michael Foucault, Said borrows the latter's notion of *discourse* as well as the *Same/Other* distinction underlying so many Western institutions. That is, he explains how Orientalism, as a form of discourse, emerges with the creation of an image of the Orient *in contrast* to the self-image of the West. The distinction is constituted as a set of opposing concept pairs: the West is rational, the East irrational and emotional, the West is dynamic, the East static etc. "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe, it is also the place of Europe's greatest, richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."⁶

Indeed the distinction between the Same and the Other has been the major tool of the Orientalists in describing or representing the places or cultures they observe. In a way, describing the Orient becomes an implicit self-affirmation, an occasion to feel pride in Western achievements vis a vis cultures lacking these. The following quotation from a French traveller in the 17th century would illustrate the point

The turks are *opposite to us in almost all respects*. and this opposition appears in nothing more plainly than in their obstinate adhering to their ancient customs. In our country we are never at rest till we have invented some new Fashion; and Beauty itself would hardly please us without the charms of Novelty. Hence the Turks accuse the Franks of Fickleness and Inconstancy and boast of their own strength of mind that fixes steadily on solid Enjoyments, without deigning to take notice of Trifles. I found that what they call Strength of Mind, Constancy or Solidity is, at the bottom, nothing else but a pure insensibility and a weakness that is altogether inexcusable in any reasonable creature... they are so far from *studying to improve their Understandings* that in a manner they profess and glory in their Ignorance, and that their curiosity is confin'd within so narrow a compass that they never undertake a Voyage without some covetous or sordid Design. Besides their Indifference and Unconcern'dness for the Publick interest; the almost Monastical solitariness of their Life and the Laziness of their Temper... (my underlines)⁷

So the first important point is that there is an Orient because there is an Occident in need of the image of the Other. In Said's words : "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident."⁸

In connection to this, Said also refers to Vico (in whose "verum-factum" principle "truth is man-made") Similarly, the Orient is, in a way, "man-made" It exists as an "ideal-type" insofar as it is recreated, reconstructed and thus made known This, he describes, as "Orientalizing the Orient" and explains how, for Europe, the Orient was always something more than what was empirically known about it. Through what Said calls "imaginative geography and its representations", stories, myths, images and beliefs are constructed around the word Orient (like young Marco Polo and his friends in Venice listening to fantastic stories about the East). The Orient thus acquires certain immediate connotations : for instance a hidden sexuality where anything may be possible, in contrast to a Victorian morality in Europe where all aspects of life including sex is highly codified and institutionalized Said exposes how women and sexuality is a recurrent theme in Orientalist literature, from the most scholarly works to popular novels for Western consumption. The same theme constitutes the subject matter for many Orientalist painters, such as in the famous Turkish Bath scenes of Ingres, or the exotic and enigmatic sexual connotations of Jean Gerome's "Snake Charmer" (which, incidentally, has become the cover for Said's book) In many of the well-known Orientalist paintings (by Jean Gerome, Ernst Rudolph, Ludwig Deutsch, John Fredrick Lewis etc) this "imaginative reconstruction" of subject matter is depicted in a remarkable accuracy of detail and realistic representation—of tiles, calligraphy, carpet patterns, clothes etc. As Linda Nochlin argues in an article⁹ this realism in representation is adopted as a tool to lend legitimacy to an underlying discursive restructuring of the Orient. Thus the most fantastic themes, such as the slave market, the call to prayer, the women in harem, violent scenes etc., are depicted in a striking photographic accuracy.

Then there is the *political question* constituting Said's fundamental preoccupation underlying his work. He makes reference once more to Foucault (the concept of power), to Gramsci (the concept of hegemony) and to Raymond Williams (the concept of culture) and discusses how hegemonic systems like culture are productive rather than inhibiting upon writers and thinkers, accounting for the consequent cultural richness and accumulated knowledge :

"... Within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the 18th century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological

theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character."¹⁰

In other words, Said challenges the general liberal consensus that "true" knowledge is fundamentally non-political. He argues how knowledge of the Orient, in all its truth and scholarliness, was the basis of Western power over it. Within the context of 19th century colonialism, this issue of *power* becomes more transparent, summarized in Benjamin Disraeli's words: "The East is a career". As Said remarks, the Orient acquires a new significance with colonialism . no longer as an object over which a single Europe contemplates, but as one over which many European powers confront each other .

"What we must reckon with is a long and slow process of appropriation by which Europe, or the European awareness of the Orient, transformed itself from being textual and contemplative into being administrative, economic and even military . . . The cumulative effect of decades of so sovereign a Western handling turned the Orient from alien into colonial space. What was important in the latter 19th century was not whether the West had penetrated and possessed the Orient, but rather how the British and the French felt that they had done it."¹¹

At this point, Said looks at the differences and the similarities of French and British attitudes in colonialism. Although it is not possible to reduce these attitudes to stereotypes, it is nonetheless legitimate to observe that the British, in general, were always physically present in the Orient as administrators and governors, while the French constituted more a cultural influence penetrating into the colonized through language, manners, mode of thought, literature etc.

The major ambiguity running unresolved throughout Said's book is that, often he seems to suggest that Orientalism, as a form of discourse, distorts reality and constructs an imaginary Orient. Yet, in stating his premises and acknowledging Foucault as his intellectual source, he denies, the existence of a "real Orient". Also when Said emphasizes Orientalism as a form of discourse speaking for a "mute Orient" which cannot speak for itself, his implications become questionable. He not only suggests a "real" Orient distorted due to its incapacity to express itself, but also implies the idea that *only* the Orient should speak for itself. (Whereas in many cases, when the Orient does speak for itself, it speaks with a Western voice). Here we spot Said's main divergence from Foucault : in the way the latter understands it, *structures of thought* are above individuals whether we (or Said) like it or not . Discursive categories are not produced by authors or by a group of authors arranged around a tradition and discourse analysis is interested not in what authors have to say or feel as subjects, but is concerned with statements as related to other statements in the field. Also different from Foucault is the essentially *humanist* standpoint from which Said produces his "oppositional analysis". He is critical of Orientalism for its construction of static images rather than historical

or personal narratives. He says, Orientalism, as a powerful discourse, replaces human experience with a textual attitude, i.e. "prefers schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with humans."¹² Thus he is explicitly involved with his subject: he appears to "write back" in a way, from the position of an Oriental whose reality is distorted and misrepresented. As a humanist, he is critical of the polarization stemming from the East/West distinction.

"When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy, the result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies."¹³

In other words, while extensively borrowing from Foucault in viewing Orientalism as a form of *discourse* and as knowledge for *power*, Said refuses to remain detached and powerless vis à vis structures of thought or discursive formations. He is committed to his role of "engaged critic of culture" and advocates a "situated and responsible adversary position."¹⁴

The strongest aspect of Said's "adversary position", I believe, is the fact that he does not counterpose a defensive, oppositional discourse, this time defining itself in opposition to the Orientalist discourse. Against false stereotypes of Orientalism, he refuses to cling to an authentic and especially traditional Oriental reality. This I find very important because it is the basis upon which I would like to criticize some recent views pertaining to Islamic culture and architecture. To cite just one example, in a paper to the Aga Khan Awards Conference in 1978, Iranian scholar Sayyed Hossein Nasr laments the disastrous consequences of Westernization and says that the ugliness of the modern environments of the Islamic world is "... in stark contrast with the serenity and beauty of the traditional Islamic city ... Fortunately, traditional Islamic architecture is still alive in the villages and smaller towns of many Islamic countries and secret documents are still preserved in some of the guilds."¹⁵ Such nostalgic glorification of an idealized Islamic past operates within the same East/West problematique established by the Orientalist tradition. Unable to cope with the problem of modernity, it ultimately glorifies the Orient as a static stereotype. In this respect, Said's position is indeed exemplary, and as acknowledged by his reviewers, "his main concern is not with what was, or even what is, but with what is becoming. Although of this latter process he tells us very little, the fundamental question is posed: on what basis may human groups accurately (and we may also add morally) be distinguished?"¹⁶

In other words, his enterprise to tackle with the difficult problem of *cultural boundaries* is the greatest contribution of the book. And the way he does it, i.e. from the position of a *universal intellectual* borrowing extensively from Western intellectual sources and literary techniques, is his merit detaching him from the biases of a particular place. It is in

this "homelessness" that the definition of the intellectual resides :

"Intellectuals may be at home almost anywhere. Or they may be homeless anywhere, feeling an alienation from all particularistic, history-bound places and feeling separated from an everyday life unintelligible except to those sharing the same tacit background assumptions."¹⁷

Said's position suggests, at least to me, possible modes of dealing with cultural issues from the standpoint of universal intellectual, emphasizing more what is shared than what separates. This, I believe, is a much needed position in the discussions of Islamic culture and architecture.

Orientalism in Architectural Culture

At the risk of oversimplifying it is possible to view Western attitudes to the Orient as a gradual transition from a spirit of curiosity and inquiry (Enlightenment culture) into fascination and nostalgia on one hand (Romantic culture) and into intervention and exploitation on the other (Colonial culture). How these attitudes manifest themselves in the artistic and architectural culture of the Western world is an immense topic in its own right. Here I merely intend to give a synoptic exposition of main currents and prominent names in order to both substantiate some of the issues posed by Edward Said, and to connect the discussion to current debates concerning Islamic architecture.

Through the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, parallel to the ventures of Western travellers, artists and statesmen in Asia and the Middle East, Oriental architecture is discovered, studied and depicted by the Western world. That the interest in Oriental architecture is, at first, permeated by a fascination with the fantasia and the exotic, is exemplified by the visions of Fischer von Erlach (who has attempted, in the first half of the 18th century, to compile a history of world architecture with all styles and cultures represented), and Jean Jacques Lequeu (who, in espousing a particular brand of "architecture parlante", attempted to depict a Chinese, Indian, Egyptian and Turkish architecture). But what really prepares the accumulation of an immense stock of information in the Western world, is the engravings and illustrated travel accounts of the early 19th century—some of the most well known names being Richard Pococke, William Hodges, Stuart and Revett, Thomas and William Daniell, Thomas Allom and William Bartlett. Depicting scenes of India, Persia, Egypt, Syria and Turkey in particular, these illustrations—perspectives and bird's eye views—are invaluable as early documents, particularly for cultures whose only form of representation has long been flat, two-dimensional miniatures. It is curious to note that in many of these engravings the buildings or the town are depicted inside foliage and ruins of earlier structures (in the fashion of Piranesi) with people, camels, dogs etc in the foreground.

illustrating the 19th century "love of ruins" and of "the remote" both in time and geography—all at the core of the Western Romantic Movement.

Then comes the proliferation of measured drawings and architectural studies which, from then on, constitute the foundation of various Oriental and Islamic revivals in architecture, serving as models for any architect who builds in these "styles". There are such drawings and studies of Pascal Coste, Francis Arundale and Joseph Bonomi (the first Westerners to measure and draw the Dome of the Rock), Owen Jones and Jules Goury (with their elaborate drawings of the Alhambra in Spain) Charles Cockrell, Charles Barry and William Chambers (with his drawings of Chinese designs). That these works have a certain precision, method and scientific orientation is significant preparing the grounds for a "reproduction" of these architectures in the Western world, in the form of influential publications, and more significantly, as actual buildings modelled after these authentic examples. If so far, Oriental/Islamic architecture was *discovered and delineated*, it was now the period of Oriental/Islamic architecture *appropriated and displayed* in the Western world. Within the context of the prevailing "battle of styles" and the eclecticism of the 19th century culture, Oriental/Islamic architecture constituted just another *style* at the architect's disposal, just another set of forms and ornamental repertoire to select from in a matter of taste and fashion. Not only Chinoises, Turqueries, Pagodas and Oriental Pavillions proliferated in Europe, but also through international fairs and colonial expositions from the latter part of the 19th century onwards, the architectures of these remote cultures were literally transported to European soil for the consumption of the Western public. In these international fairs and expositions, Oriental cultures appear as an exotic flavor to these events which, otherwise, constitute a platform of confrontation among industrialized powers. The stage set buildings, the silks, embroidery, crafts etc of the Orient are for display in front of the Western public, no longer as proud testimonies of a distant but powerful and challenging culture (as had been the case for instance, when in the middle ages, gifts were sent to Charlemagne's court from Baghdad), but as a spectacle reinforcing the differentness and superiority of an industrialized West—whose very superiority is capable of appropriating the flavor of the Orient for the enjoyment of her public.

A telling episode is the visit of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulaziz to Paris on the occasion of 1867 International Exposition (The Ottoman Empire participated in the Exposition as an exotic flavor. Her pavillions, designed by French architects, were replicas of the Green Mosque of Bursa and of a Bosphorous mansion, reconstructed on the Exposition grounds between the Eiffel Tower and Ecole Militaire). The Sultan was taken to museums, operas and palaces, turning into a "student of civilization" in front of a curious public who wanted to see, with their own eyes, the symbol of Eastern power that had challenged, frightened but also fascinated Europe for long years. An editorial in *La Presse* on

the occasion of Sultan's visit gave an account of the by-gone Eastern supremacy and concluded with the final message " what enormous change does today represent. The attention of the whole world is upon old, Christian Europe Europe is now the centre and the supporting point of the world. We are the East ! We are the light !"

In other words, the contact between the East and the West was not really a matter of reciprocity While Western presence in the East appropriated the latter in the form of descriptions, illustrations and knowledge, the occasional Eastern presence in the West was a passive one, itself to be appropriated and turned into a spectacle. This one-sidedness of the discourse, i.e. the nonexistence of a comparable "Occidentalism" is another interesting point reinforcing Said's emphasis on the notion of power For the West, projects of domination have acted as a precondition for curiosity and the search for knowledge Whereas the East's attitude to the West was either one of indifference and ignorance or of child-like fascination and admiration, with little, if at all any, awareness of the economic, social, political and technological foundations of the achievements of the West. At occasional instances of contact, this often unfolded as a difficulty in describing and depicting the West, to which we can also add the prohibition of visual representation in Islam The absence of a particular project (political, economic etc.) makes the Oriental's vision of the West, a very unsystematic, often aimless collection of observations and impressions—as exemplified for instance, by the memories of Celebi Mehmet Efendi sent by the Ottoman Empire to Paris in 1720-21 for a temporary mission. That the Ottoman Empire was about two hundred years behind in realising the need to install her own permanent embassies in Western capitals, is another manifestation of this indifference

Finally, not only was Oriental architecture brought to the West, but also it was capitalized upon by the Westerners, in the form of colonial architecture. In many cases, colonial architecture was based on Western architectural traditions, methods and types, "dressed up" in local motifs and decorative element, often in a completely different context than the traditional norms For instance, motifs traditionally used in private interiors, were blown up in scale and applied to monumental facades on public streets¹⁸ And Said's notion of "knowledge of the Orient for power" again underlies many of the architectural enterprises of colonialism. French colonial architecture in Morocco, for instance, was part of France's "visible politics" in North Africa between 1830-1930, with all the systematic research by colonial architects to build up a specific colonial architecture and to legitimize its stylistic foundations I would like to draw attention to a very common misconception that colonial architecture contains an intentional ideological project to seduce and subjugate the local population Here Althusser's notion of ideology, as something structurally more complex than direct ruling class intentionality is useful. Ideology as something operating, in a way, behind the back of individual

actors, is also relevant for the case of colonial architecture. In many cases, the colonial architect operates with a genuine belief in the appropriateness of his work for its specific geographical and cultural location.

With a major chronological jump, I would now like to conclude with some remarks on the current debates pertaining to Islamic architecture. Said's exposition of the East/West distinction as a form of discourse historically reproduced by institutions and by relations of power, reveals how the idea of Islamic architecture frequently shares the same Orientalist paradigm, i.e. the distinction between the Same and the Other. The implications of accepting this distinction are far more serious than would at first appear. The extension of this distinction into *culture/civilization* distinction, leads to the conclusion that culture is local, national, Oriental, Islamic, whatever while civilization is equivalent to Western technology (This, incidentally, constitutes the essence of the "dual model" in Turkish culture at the turn of the century, resulting in the so called First National Architecture Movement). This attitude can be read into the current Orientalism of some Western practices and corporate architecture in the oil rich Middle East. Islamic motifs have become a marketable commodity ending up in bizarre and unprecedented products—like a mosque placed on top of a skyscraper, on wallpaper with Islamic calligraphy and geometric patterns or it (My argument is not against the wallpaper but against the myth that it is Islamic while wallpaper with, say, flower patterns is not. Whereas the issue is not the pattern, but the wallpaper itself).

Theoretically speaking, appropriation of Islamic architecture (or learning from it) may be in one or more of the three modes: ornamental/iconographical, formal/typological and craft/technical. Connecting back to my introductory statements, I merely intend to imply the potential of the latter two within a tradition/modernity problematique, and to warn against the likeliness of the former to be exploited within an East/West problematique. Given the nature of our "post-modern culture", what frequently ends up being the case is a reproduction of the myth of Islamic architecture, in an up-to-date version of "orientalizing the orient".

This is where the importance of the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture starts. The Awards, in general, have the merit (very much like Said) of trying to avoid the mental structure of Orientalism, and to question cultural boundaries in all its difficulty and complexity. Making explicit reference to Said's book, Brian Taylor gives credit to the AKA:

"The mechanism of the award, by encouraging an appreciation of indigeneous traditional architectures as well as attempts to adapt modern technological means to evolving traditional needs, will aid Muslims (and non-Muslims it is hoped) in understanding the degrees of past cultural dependence upon the West in the realm of architecture and city planning. Only with such knowledge of the intricate cross cultural relationships of dominance and subservience, whether

by political or purely economic means, will developing Islamic societies assert their own authentic, independent cultural values in building”¹⁹

I am not able to go into the details of various positions within the AKA programme or evaluate its choices. But I would like to say that, in spite of occasional orthodox Islamic views using it as a platform, the programme, in general, avoids being trapped in the mental structure of Orientalism. In searching for ways of resolving the tradition/modernity, culture/civilization tensions, there is a promising awareness of the elements of *universality* as exposed by Paul Ricoeur in “Universal Civilization and National Cultures” to which Kenneth Frampton often refers as the intellectual source of his critical regionalism. Positions like that of Nasr, whom I mentioned earlier, are (and should be) critically questioned on the AKA platform. Islamic radicalism should not be allowed to obscure the positive side of modernity, i.e. the unprecedented possibility of freedom from want and massive access to comfort. Paul Ricoeur reminds us :

“Only a faith which values time and change and puts man in the position of a master before the world, history and his own life, seems fit to survive and endure. Otherwise, its fidelity to the past will be nothing more than a simple folkloric ornamentation. The problem is not simply to repeat the past, but rather to take root in it in order to ceaselessly invent.”²⁰

With Ricoeur I would like to mark the need for *authentic modernity* which can only be achieved by breaking the boundaries of Orientalist stereotypes and dissolving the East/West distinction as absolute categories. That is on one side, it is important to demystify the illusion that European culture was, in fact, and by right, a universal culture, and on the other, to avoid a retreat to the idea of a traditional East just for the sake of opposing this illusion. As Fernand Braudel also argues, it is not true that individual civilizations are threatened by the unifying effects of modernity :

“We would have to be blind not to feel this massive transformation of the world; but it is not a transformation which is taking place everywhere, and where it is taking place, it is in the forms and with a human dimension and resonance which are rarely ever the same. The triumph of *civilization* in the singular, does not spell disaster for *civilizations* in the plural.”²¹

I would like to conclude on the same vein, with Ricoeur again who says : “The human condition is such that different contexts of civilization are possible.”²²

- 1 Sevki Vanlı in the symposium, “Modern Architecture and Beyond in Turkey”, Marmara Adası, August 1984 (published in *Mimarlık*, 84/11-12)
2. Not geographically peripheral, but peripheral in the sense of I. Wallerstein’s “Modern World System” (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
3. Albert Hourani.
4. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Press, 1979, p. 60.

5. Albert Hourani, *op cit*, p. 213
6. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage Press, 1979, p. 1.
7. DuMont, *A New Voyage to The Levent*, London, 1696
8. Edward Said, *op cit*, p. 2
9. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient", *Art In America*, May 1983, p. 120.
10. Edward Said, *op cit*, p. 7.
11. Edward Said, *op cit* p. 210-211.
12. Edward Said *op cit* p. 93
13. Edward Said, *op. cit* p. 45
14. See Edward Said, "The Problem of Textuality", *Critical Inquiry*, Summer '78.
15. Sayyed Hossein Nasr
16. James Clifford, "Review of Said's Orientalism", *History and Theory* v. 19, 1980, p. 221
17. Alvin Gouldner, "Prologue to A Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals" *TELOS* 26. Winter 1975-76, p. 20
18. Brian Bruce Taylor, "Rethinking Colonial Architecture", *Mimar* 13
19. Brian Bruce Taylor, "On the AKAAs Programme", supplement to *Domus*, December, 1980
20. Paul Ricoeur, "Universal Civilization and National Cultures" in *History and Truth*, p. 282
21. Fernand Braudel, *On History*, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1983, p. 213
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Note

Coconut Economy of Kerala

COCONUT cultivation occupies an important place in Kerala. It is the second most important crop, next only to paddy, occupying about 24 per cent of the gross cropped area as in 1977-78.

Coconut in Kerala accounts for about 68 per cent of the area under coconut in India and its share in all-India production is about 66 per cent.¹

In 1973-74 coconut compared to other crops contributed the highest share of 17 per cent to the state's income.² It provides employment to about 16 per cent of the work force in Kerala. Coconut also accounts for a third of the value of agricultural production in Kerala. Coconut is also the raw material for a number of important industries like coir and coconut oil. Thus it is right to say that coconut economy is the backbone of the Kerala economy.

According to the Directorate of Coconut Development and Trade, the annual consumption of coconut among the high and middle income groups was 430 nuts per household every year and among the lower income families it was 150 nuts per household per year on an average.⁴ Assuming that in 1976 roughly 7.5 lakh households belonged to the first category and 27.5 lakh households belonged to the second category in Kerala, the annual household consumption would work out to 735 million nuts in 1976. Coconut is also used for religious purposes and some are plucked as tender nuts. Taking into account the above two purposes for which coconut is used and the 5 million used as seeds, total use of coconut for all these purposes would be 800 million nuts in the state.⁵

The consumption study conducted by the Coconut Directorate concluded that middle and high income groups consumed 29 kilograms of coconut oil per household every year.⁶ In 1976 such households numbered 7.5 lakhs; lower income groups which consumed 15 kilograms of coconut oil annually per household numbered about 27.5 lakhs households in 1976. Thus we get the total consumption by households in 1976 as 63,000 tonnes. The industrial consumption in the state is 2000 tonnes. Hotels consume another 1000 tonnes per annum.

Market Structure

Trade in coconut is monopsonistic in nature, with a large number of cultivators to sell their produce and only a few village merchants and wholesale merchants acting as the agents of the millers. This monopsony in trade is a reason why the coconut cultivator is not able to get a better price for his produce.

About 3/4th of the nuts produced in Kerala are disposed of in the form of nuts itself by the cultivator after retaining 15 per cent for their own consumption.

Out of the total copra of 2.95 lakh tonnes produced in Kerala only 50 per cent is used for crushing in the local milling industry and the balance is marketed to Maharashtra. The copra crushed in Kerala yields about 96,000 tonnes of coconut oil annually out of which about 30,000 tonnes of coconut oil move out of Kerala to other states, mainly to Maharashtra; and about 150 million nuts have been moving out of Kerala.

On analysing the data we see that 1/3rd of the coconut oil, half of the copra and a good amount of coconuts move out of Kerala annually to Maharashtra. Through wholesale dealers these finally find their way to a few monopolists such as Hindustan Lever and Tata. It is these monopolists who finally determine the price of copra and coconut oil. In turn the price of copra and coconut oil affect the prices of coconut.

Table I
Area under coconut through the Plans

Plans	Percentage change in area
First	9.28
Second	8.93
Third	16.14
Annual	12.55
Fourth	5.23
Fifth	—9.98
Annual	0.46

Note : Base years are the first year of each plan period.

Source : Compiled from Report on the Marketing of Coconut in India, Agricultural Marketing Advisor, Directorate of Marketing and Inspection ; Agricultural Statistics in Kerala, 1975, Bureau of Economics and Statistics : Statistics for Planning 1977 and Statistics for Planning 1980, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Kerala.

From Table I it is clear that area under coconut kept increasing at fast rates till the Annual Plans 1966-69. Since then it increased at a lower rate especially during the fourth plan and registered a negative growth during the fifth plan and was stagnant during the annual plans between 1978-80.

Though there was the depressing effect of the decline in productivity since 1955-56 which may have influenced the farmers, area under coconut grew, perhaps due to the following reasons, namely, (1) coconut was a crop which provided greater income compared to most other crops, (2) land reforms had increased the number of small operators for whom coconut was important in meeting their cash needs, (3) coconut labourers were not as militant as labourers in paddy cultivation.

The causes for the decline in area since the fifth plan may be the following. (1) the incidence of root-wilt was intensifying and spreading, making many farms less remunerative, (2) crops such as rubber were proving to be more remunerative, and (3) coconut is a crop under the purview of the land reforms act and to avoid land reforms, big farmers converted their coconut gardens to other plantation crops such as rubber.

A study of the variation of area under coconut in various districts between 1957 and 1980-81 as shown in Table II shows that the biggest increase came in the case of Palghat and the only decrease in area came in Alleppey. For the two new districts of Idukki and Malappuram there was decline in coconut area between 1973-74 and 1980-81. Area in Alleppey declined due to reduction in gross area sown, there was a reduction in the number of trees which were cut due to conversion of coconut area into other crops, especially plantation crops. Malappuram also showed a similar trend as in Alleppey.

The adverse impact of the root-wilt which is a disease affecting coconut palms, is more keenly felt by the small and marginal farmers who predominate among the coconut cultivators in the state. This is because the small and marginal farmers who live on the edge of the poverty line experience a shortfall in production due to root-wilt. None of the measures taken by the government has benefited the root-wilt affected small coconut farmer substantially so as to save him from ruin. The small farmer still continues cultivation but to support his family, he has to supplement income from coconut with income from non-farming sources. The incidence and spread of the root-wilt is thus causing considerable strain to the coconut cultivator of Kerala.

In the state about 15 to 20 per cent of the total number of palms are estimated to be root-wilt diseased.

Table II
*Area under Coconut in various districts of Kerala in 1957-58, 1973-74
 and 1980-81*

				(in '000 ha.)
District	1957-58	1973-74	1980-81	Percentage variation
Trivandrum	55.93		73.77	31 90
Quilon	56.22		81.77	45 45
Alleppey	68.24		63.11	-7.52
Kottayam	22.92		50 12	123.04
Idukki		23 04	16.61	-27.86
Ernakulam	30.58		60.88	99.08
Trichur	33.09		54 03	63 28
Palghat	2 81		22 95	716 73
Malappuram		69 38	59.68	-13 98
Kozhikode	50.77		94 47	86.07
Cannanore	45 52		72.98	60 33

Note : Since between 1957-58 and 1980-81 the districts of Kerala were re-organised certain changes have been made as follows. As Idukki was part of Kottayam, the 1957-58 figure for Kottayam has been reduced by 3/5th and similarly that for Ernakulam has been reduced by 1/4th. Similarly Malappuram was a part of Palghat and Kozhikode and therefore their area has been reduced by 2/5th and 1/2 respectively. These changes have been made to facilitate comparison.

Source : Agricultural Statistics in Kerala, 1975, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Statistics for Planning, 1977, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Kerala

An analysis of area under principal crops between 1952-53 and 1981-82 shows that the area under coconut increased by 51.69 per cent while some crops such as coffee, rubber and cashewnut increased by more than 300 per cent. This comparison of rates of growth of rubber, coffee and cashewnut, as opposed to coconut, shows how the former are replacing coconut as more lucrative crops. This also stands as evidence for the contention that coconut is being replaced by plantation crops.

Production Trends

From Table III we find that production of coconut began declining since the fourth plan. In fact the decline started during 1972-73 or the

fourth year of the fourth plan and this decline intensified during the fifth plan. This was due to the fall in productivity since 1955-56 and the decline in area since 1975-76.

The district-wise variation of production between 1957-58 and 1980-81 shows that 4 out of the 9 districts which can be compared as shown in Table IV showed a decline in their production of coconut. Among these, in Alleppey area declined most sharply by 41 per cent. Among the 5 other districts which increased their production Palghat tops the list with 321 per cent. Among the other two districts of Idukki and Ernakulam formed later, a comparison of production between 1973-74 and 1980-81 shows that in both production declined.

Table III
Production of coconut through the Plans

Plans	Percentage variation in production
First	53.04
Second	1.19
Third	1.42
Annual	11.94
Fourth	-6.40
Fifth	-17.75
Annual	-0.84

Note : Base years are the first year of each plan period.

Source : Compiled from Report on the Marketing of Coconut in India, Agricultural Marketing Advisor, Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Agricultural Statistics, in Kerala, 1975, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Statistics for Planning 1977 and Statistics for Planning 1980, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Kerala.

The main reasons for the decline in production were decline in area and the impact of root-wilt. While Idukki and Malappuram showed declines in production due mainly to reduction in area, in Trivandrum and Quilon production declined mainly due to the impact of root-wilt. In Alleppey production declined due to the impact of a composite of influences mentioned above, namely root-wilt and reduction in area.

A comparison of variation of production of other important crops, compared to coconut between 1952-53 and 1980-81 shows that percentage change for coconut remained almost stagnant with a marginal increase of 1 per cent, certain perennials such as rubber and coffee increased their production by more than 6 times. This shows how crops such as coffee and rubber have become more popular than coconut and how these crops are

displacing coconut Coconut, of course, did not perform as badly as Ragi whose production declined by 80 per cent. When all these crops are taken together it may be observed that there is an average increase in production of 116.86 per cent.

Table IV
*Districtwise production of coconut in 1957-58, 1973-74
and 1980-81*

District	1957-58	1973-74	(in million nuts)	
			1980-81	Percentage variation
Trivandrum	370		354	—4.32
Quilon	424		344	—18.87
Alleppey	503		294	—41.55
Kottayam	136		188	38.24
Idukki		123	43	—65.04
Ernakulam	221		327	47.96
Trichur	220		347	57.73
Palghat	19		80	321.05
Malappuram		307	264	—14.01
Kozhikode	351		456	29.91
Cannanore	315		311	—1.27

Note · Since between 1957-58 & 1980-81 the districts of Kerala, were re-organised certain changes have been made as follows As Idukki was part of Kottayam, the 1957-58 figure for Kottayam has been reduced by 3/5th and similarly that for Ernakulam has been reduced by 1/4th. Malappuram was a part of Palghat & Kozhikode and therefore their area has been reduced by 2/5th and 1/2 respectively.

Source · Agricultural Statistics in Kerala, 1975, Bureau of Economics & Statistics Statistics for Planning 1977, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Kerala

Productivity Changes

From Table V we see a picture of decline of yield from the second plan In fact the decline began actually since 1955-56 which was the last year of the first plan The main reason for the continuous decline in yield from 1955-56 is the worsening root-wilt disease. This is borne out even from the recent state government declaration that an additional four districts are root-wilt affected Till the 1960s only four districts were root-wilt affected which were Quilon, Kottayam, Alleppey and Ernakulam.

Now the districts which have been newly affected are Trichur, Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Trivandrum

Table V
Yield of coconut through the Plans

Plants	Percentage change of yield during the plan period
First	39.83
Second	—7.07
Third	—8.38
Annual	—0.53
Fourth	—11.04
Fifth	—8.81
Annual	—1.30

Note : Base years are the first year of each plan period.

Source : Compiled from Report on the Marketing of Coconut in India, Agricultural Marketing Advisor, Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Agricultural Statistics in Kerala, 1975, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Statistics for Planning 1977 and Statistics for Planning 1980, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Kerala.

Also over the years coconut cultivation has been extended to more and more marginal lands. This could be another cause for the decline in yield, though this may not be as significant as the other reasons given above. Though new area has been added on to coconut cultivation which is mainly sub-marginal and marginal land, land which was earlier under coconut has been converted to rubber cultivation etc, urbanisation and housing development in rural areas.

A study of changes in yield of various districts between 1957-58 and 1973-74 on the one hand and between 1973-74 and 1980-81 shows the following. Firstly, the yield changes between 1957-58 and 1973-74 show declines in all districts. The reason for this decline in yield is due to the worsening root-wilt. Secondly a comparison of yield between 1973-74 and 1980-81 shows that out of the 11 districts, 4 districts increased their yield. But 6 districts recorded declines in yield. Yield increased in the 4 districts mainly due to reduction in uneconomic palms. But it must be noted that while yield increased in certain districts since the fifth plan, the rate of decline in yield in certain other districts also declined.

A comparison of the performance of coconut to that of other crops between 1952-53 and 1981-82 shows that while yield of coconut declined by 33 percent the yield of most crops increased. Out of about 15 other crops

which were compared 9 crops which include ginger, arecanut, tapioca and tea increased their yield by about 250, 135, 124 and 108 percent respectively. The average yield performance of the crops taken together was an increase of 39 percent.

From Table VI we see that area contributed substantially to production during the second and third plans. But during these plans, yield adversely affected production. Since the first annual plans, and till the second annual plans we see that yield positively contributed to production while the contribution of area to yield was positive and negative alternatively.

Table VI
Contribution of Area and Productivity in Production
Changes through the Plans

Plan	Yield effect (Percentage)	Area effect (Percentage)	Interaction effect (Per- centage)
First	75.30	17.62	7.08
Second	-591.76	745.00	-52.60
Third	-395.21	1139.44	-144.24
Annual	4.48	105.05	0.57
Fourth	172.66	-81.72	9.06
Fifth	49.17	56.35	-5.52
Annual	154.14	-54.85	0.71

Source : P. S. George, *The Coconut Economy of Kerala* (An analysis of production trends and projections), Ed. M.A. Oommen, *Kerala Economy Since Independence*, Oxford and IBH Publishing House, 1979.

Farm Price Movements

Table VII shows that farm prices have been increasing throughout the plans though at different rates. The third and fourth plans are noteworthy for registering big increases in farm prices. These increases in farm prices are what made coconut cultivation look remunerative even though there was the impact of the root-wilt leading to decreases in productivity and production. In 1983 and 1984 there was a big spurt in coconut prices due to scarcity and this has influenced farmers to plant additional palms and increase the cultivation of coconut.

Table VII
Farm prices of coconut through the plans

Plans	Percentage change
Second	39.74
Third	83.21
Annual	6.54
Fourth	78.47
Fifth	15.96

Source: Calculated from Agricultural Statistics in Kerala, 1975, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala, Statistics for Planning 1977 and Statistics for Planning 1980, Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Kerala

Note: Base years are the first years of each plan.

A comparison of farm prices of some important crops with coconut shows that coconut registered the fourth highest increase among the 9 crops between 1955-56 and 1981-82. Coconut farm prices increased by 780 per cent. In comparison to the average increase in farm price of 1522 per cent the increase in coconut farm prices was lower.

The wholesale price of coconut was increasing at lower rates compared to farm prices during the second and third plans and during the first annual plan wholesale prices declined while farm prices increased though at a very slow rate. During the fourth plan also farm prices increased faster than wholesale prices but in the fifth plan the farm prices increased at a slow rate while wholesale prices increased much faster than farm prices of coconut.

When cumulative percentage variations of wholesale and farm prices were compared it was found that over the 23 year period between 1955-56 and 1977-78 wholesale prices increased 5.28 per cent more than farm prices.

Size-wise Study of Coconut Farmers

The following table gives a size-wise distribution of coconut holdings in Kerala.

Table VIII

<i>Size-wise distribution of coconut holdings in Kerala</i>	
Size of holding in hectares	Percentage of holding
Less than 0.2	37.1
0.2—1.0	52.8
1.3—2.0	7.9
2.0 & above	2.2

Source: P. K. Thampan, *Coconut Culture in India*, The Green Villa Publishers, 1972, p. 6.

If we classify farmers having holding below 0.2 hectares as tiny holdings and between 0.2 and 1.0 hectares as small holdings, we find that these two groups dominate the coconut holdings, especially the small farmers.

Below we give case studies of tiny, small, medium (1.0—2.0 hectares) and large farmers (2.0 hectares and above). The data have been compiled from field survey during 1982-83.

Tiny Farmer

We have for this case study a farmer with 0.12 hectares of coconut cultivation. We find that he does not have any marketable surplus of coconut. His household has an annual expenditure of 8,736 rupees while the net household income is only 6101 rupees. Thus he incurs a debt of Rs. 2635. It is noteworthy that his major source of income is through remittances from relatives to the tune of Rs. 4200. His paid cost of production is as follows :

Paid cost of production	=Rs. 162
Labour cost Tilling	=Rs. 60
Labour cost Plucking	=Rs. 55
Farm yard manure	=Rs. 27
Pesticides	=Rs. 20

Here we notice that the tiny farmer does not spend much on fertilizers and that his main costs are labour costs. Under labour cost we find that even tilling which can be normally done by the farmer is got done by hired labour at the cost of Rs. 20 per day. This is because this tiny farmer did not find time to do tilling. We also see that pesticides are applied to the tree. This is done as a measure against root-wilt. In fact, root-wilt has become a major problem for the tiny farmer.

Below we show the imputed cost of production for this small farmer :

Imputed cost of production	=Rs. 137
Labour cost	=Rs. 120
Farm yard manure	=Rs. 17

Small Farmer

We next take a farmer with 0.71 ha of coconut land. We find he has no imputed cost but only paid costs whose break up is as follows :

Paid cost of production	= Rs. 2262
Tilling Rs. 20 per day	= Rs. 400
Chemical fertilizer	= Rs. 752
Chemical fertilizer labour cost	= Rs. 80
Plucking cost Rs. 50 paise per tree and 12 nuts per 100 palm	= Rs. 570
Gathering charges	= Rs. 480

But his profit from coconut cultivation is quite meagre. It is only Rs. 1076. He meets the substantial portion of his household expenditure from non-agricultural source

Household expenditure	Rs 15612
Remittance from Kuwait	Rs. 13800

With this farmer we find that Rs. 752 is paid for chemical fertilizers. Thus due to the high price of chemical fertilizers, the cost of production for the small farmer has increased substantially

Medium Farmer

This medium farmer has a total of 1.62 hectares of land. Out of this 81 hectare is coconut garden. His profit and cost of production is as follows :

Gross revenue	=Rs. 7603
Paid cost of production	Rs 2169
Of which : Tilling cost	Rs 240
Chemical fertilizer	Rs. 750
Chemical fertilizer application labour cost	Rs. 150
Farm yard manure	Rs. 24
Farm yard manure application labour cost	Rs 30
Plucking charges	Rs. 420
Gathering labour cost	Rs. 210
Taking pits labour cost	Rs 300
Irrigation cost	Rs. 45
Net profit	Rs 5434

In this case this farmer met most of his household expenditure of Rs. 5884 from his profit from coconut of Rs 5434. This farmer also had taken a loan of Rs. 12,000 for which he was giving an interest of Rs 2160. His imputed production costs are following :

Imputed production cost	Rs. 430
Farm yard manure	Rs. 220
Farm yard manure application labour cost	Rs 105
Gathering labour cost	Rs 105

Large Farmer

This large farmer has garden land of 4.31 hectares. This farmer had the following costs of production and profit.

Gross income from coconut	Rs 18,706
Paid cost of production	Rs 6,004
Of which :	
Tilling labour cost @ 20 paise	Rs. 640
Chemical fertilizer cost	Rs. 390
Chemical fertilizer application labour cost	Rs. 160
Farm yard manure	Rs 2225
Farm yard manure application labour cost	Rs. 160
Plucking cost	Rs 1282
Gathering cost	Rs. 697
Pesticides use	Rs. 450

This large farmer did not have any imputed cost. His household expenditure was 12,900 rupees which he met mainly from coconut.

Thus we see that while the tiny farmer had debts and could not sustain his family from coconut cultivation, the small farmer had to depend on non-agricultural sources for his livelihood. The medium farmer on the other hand just managed to make both ends meet, while the large farmer had enough savings after all his expenditure was met.

Action Programme for the Seventh Plan

If processing units are controlled by cultivators, price control and artificial scarcity can be avoided because middlemen and processors can be eliminated. Also to face the powerful middlemen, the coconut growers in the state should join into a cooperative or cooperatives. And to remove the hold on coconut cultivators by merchants, the Coconut Development Board or a state-wide co-operative or a government sponsored system should take over the purchasing of coconut from the farms.

To find a final solution to the problem of decline in yield and thus of the increasing uneconomic nature of coconut cultivation, an effective cure should be found for the root-wilt.

The coconut oil import policy of the central government has also been found to adversely affect the coconut cultivators of Kerala and the coconut oil manufacturing units in the small scale sector. Therefore the central government should adopt a coconut oil import policy which does not adversely affect the Kerala economy.

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1 See P S George, *The Coconut Economy of Kerala (An Analysis of Production trends and projections)* Ed M A Oommen, *Kerala Economy Since Independence*, Oxford and IBH Publishing House, 1979

2 *Ibid*

3 See *Report of the Committee on Commodity Taxation*, Government of Kerala, 1979.

4 *Ibid*

5 *Ibid*

6 *Ibid*

7 P S George, *op cit*

Book Review

Image of India

G BONGARD-LEVIN & A VIGASIN, *The Image of India*, The Study of Ancient Indian Civilization in the USSR, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984. pp. 270.

As a necessary part of the colonial expansion to the East, the image of India as a land of wisdom, wonders and fabulous wealth, gradually took shape in Western and Eastern Europe, as well as the Middle East. After the 14th century journeys to India played an important role in transforming knowledge about India, on the basis of an acquaintance with the country and its culture. Although the Indian influence initially spread to many countries through Graeco-Roman culture, and was reflected in the written and oral tradition of their people, it was later to be interpreted in the form of symbols that would aid the Biblical cosmogony, which was generally in dispute with the Graeco-Roman theories of the Cosmos. The Christianisation of India was part of theological polemics and the struggle of ideas, so that India emerged in folk-lore as a fabulous land, inhabited by righteous people. In the period of the Crusades, Europe displayed a great interest in the wealth of the East, giving rise to the myth of a great Christian kingdom in the East. In the folk-lore tradition, "rich India" became an integral element in the heroic epic, where historical and geographical reality were eroded and conventionalised because of the didactic purpose.

The view of India, as a country existing regardless of time, and never changing over a period that covered 2,000 years, was typical of Medieval literature. By the 17th century, the *Cosmographia* effected departure in the field of Indian studies, since its purpose was neither literary nor didactic, but practical: to aid conquest, diplomacy and to implant the "true faith" and eradicate paganism in the East. Nikitin's journal of his journey to India, however stands apart, as he was a foreigner with modest means, who was obliged to be friendly with the local people, and there is scarcely a word that is arrogant or derogatory in his *Voyages*. He is also the first to point to the similarities between Indian and Russian Grandees and the plight of the rural poor. From such a beginning, the Russian school of Indology, based on the historiographic method, brought to light many insights in the field of Ancient Indian civilisation, as a part of the mainstream of cultural development in the world.

As a method, historiography surveys the field and identifies specific questions which need to be raised and discussed, particularly where the character of source materials relies too much on supposition and hypothesis. It also stresses not only the accumulation of ideas in such a survey, but also the struggle of ideas which is a part of the cultural life of any country. Historiographic research ranges over philosophy and politics, literature and art, the general spiritual climate of the age and the specific "national spirit" of the area under study. In contrast to this, the economic and political penetration of the leading West European countries into Asia, led to the ideology of colonialism having an unfavourable influence on scientific research in the field of Oriental studies. As a result, British Indology exhibits scornful opinions of the people and culture of the East as well as the idea of the superiority of European civilization. This was as much a distortion, as the earlier Romantic view current in Germany, of overestimating the ancient age of Indian culture and considering it to be the source of world civilization.

The Russian school is not widely known in our country because of language difficulties and the general prejudice against Russian scholarship. *The Image of India* brings to our notice the wealth of literature that has been translated for research in the USSR on the subject of Indian culture and history, and reveals a deep respect for the Indian people and a desire to understand developments that link India with the rest of the world. It covers the pre-18th century period and subsequently, the development of Soviet Indology, in the best Russian Oriental studies tradition. The Russian tradition differs from the European in that that it was based on the 18th century Enlighteners, who were opposed to Tsarist policies and ideology. The 19th century brought in liberal and democratic thoughts, which were anti-colonial and placed the Russians on the side of the enslaved people of the East who were struggling for liberation from the yoke of colonial exploitation. After the October Revolution, Lenin played an important role in bringing about many fundamental changes in Oriental Studies as a part of the programme of socialist construction and stressed the need for spreading knowledge about India among the broad strata of the Russian masses.

Such a historical perspective establishes the fact that Russian science did not concentrate almost exclusively on the people of Europe whilst ignoring the great thousand year old history of the other people of the world. The Russians held that there could be no world history that did not include the East, in contrast to historians like von Ranke who provided a theoretical basis for excluding India from the general process of world history. The absence of Eurocentrism is a distinguishing feature of Soviet Indology. The Russians considered the aim of science to be the study of mankind, whose unity was more important than the barriers of the natural or socio-cultural environment. Vasilyev wrote: "The remote East is populated by our brothers . . . They have their

own history, their own development, their own views". For such scholars, the lagging behind of the East was a temporary phenomenon. "When the world becomes unified the East will not only be a repository of education, but also its motive force. (p.81)

The third feature is the historical approach. Minayev wrote: In portraying the destiny of a religion we must discover the laws determining its development", (p 83) and again "the essence of any spiritual development reveals itself to us in the entirety of its historical development and can be understood only when this process is traced back to the beginning. And this way its sources are revealed." He was one of the first scholars to give an impartial assessment of British colonial policy and its disastrous consequences for India.

A study of monuments, manuscripts, excavated materials was combined with the views of guides, local pundits and scholars. Minayev wrote in his Indian diary "Engrossed in Jain manuscript, chose one and wanted a copy of it, on which grounds I had a curious conversation with the Principal, who insisted that I approach Dr. Buhler for information about the Jains and when I pointed out that the native scholars could give me the same information (he) categorically denied this. Dastur who was present at this conversation was extremely displeased at this remark and ..(said) these English do not understand anything." (p 89)

Evident too was the desire not only to study the relics of Ancient Indian culture but also to preserve them, because the ancient and the modern were two sides of single object of research—the spiritual and material culture of a nation (p.85)

The importance of placing the independence of Indian scholarship on a firm foundation lies behind Minayev's distinction between the scientific western scholars and those serving the interests of the British administration in India.(p 90)

In Russian Universities of the last century, there were usually departments of comparative linguistics and Sanskrit, probably as a result of the interest of the Tsarist government to expand trade directly with India, but when such an enterprise did not succeed, Indology was not given any encouragement. For the Russian scholar the East could not be a dead, bookish object of scientific inquisitiveness, just as the study of Ancient India was not meant to push into the background the scientific and practical importance of vital phenomena in contemporary India. (p.103) There was a strong realisation that the East was no longer a slumbering giant. It was also significant that many parts of Central Asia were incorporated into Russia, which had been in direct contact with countries that bordered India (at some time they had even formed one state)

However, these progressive principles did not receive Tsarist support, as Oriental studies was thought of as a part of the study of classical languages; an armchair science, which was also the general position of Indology in Europe at the time.

At the turn of the century, there was a growing interest in Indian philosophy and religion, as well as literature. Tolstoy was very impressed with Buddhism, Brahminism and the fairy-tale. He reflected the interest of his age in the religion and literature of India. This pointed to the shortcomings of this early school of Indology, that it concentrated on Ancient Indian culture and ignored her social and political history. In the field of culture also, it concentrated primarily on Buddhism. Very little attention was paid to contemporary India.

It was time to set new tasks for Russian Indology if it was not to suffer from the extreme individualism and lack of organisation of Western Indology. Oldenburg had identified the cause of this as "insufficient closeness to life" (p. 110). Secondly, no importance was attached to the Eastern scholarly tradition, which was contrasted with the Western tradition as the only true one. Oldenburg belonged to the opposite tradition that every cultured nation had its own understanding of its culture and if any scholar had to scientifically analyse such a tradition, he had to take into account such a scholarly tradition. He also stood for the unity of the world-historical process and did not believe in opposing East and West. Whilst criticising Eurocentrism he also came out against extreme nationalism, which was a feature of some Indian works of history and culture. He introduced a consistent historical method, including that of literary criticism, and all cultural phenomena were not of abstract interest to him, but a part of the general course of historical development. (p. 113) He therefore was the first to point to the importance of Harappan excavations and always stressed the sociological basis of analysis, which made him oppose the widely held view of all-embracing spiritualism in India. "It is high time", he wrote, "to put an end to the legend that India is specifically, as it were, a purely religious country: there is, of course, no doubt that in this field India showed great creativity, but it is equally beyond question that Indians, like other peoples, have a complex social pattern, that her agriculture in the countryside, the crafts, the industry and the trade of her towns had an important place in India's life, no less than in other countries, and that without a knowledge and understanding of her economic life we shall never understand India and her complex history." (p. 117) He therefore stressed the importance of epigraphy and the *shastras* which he felt were an important source for the history of the Indian economy and the class struggle. Oldenburg expressed an unusual belief in the possibilities of Eastern nations, contrary to the armchair scientists, who took a narrow view of the subject. Whilst the Academy of Science, of which Oldenburg was permanent secretary, was treated with distrust by the Tsarist government, Lenin personally directed science to the task of building socialism. Thus the Academy was revived with attention, assistance and genuine support.

As Oldenburg wrote in 1919: "For mankind to-day, which though as yet weakly and unskillfully, is seeking for the brotherhood of nations,

it is essential to know as much as possible of what has already been done by mankind in this respect." On the need to study Buddhism he wrote : "Nowhere in the world . . . can there have been a people who sought with such effort and intensity to find answers to questions of life and death, of the purpose and meaning of life, as in India . . . the history of India is extremely important for understanding the history of mankind as a whole, and this history is essential to us for a proper understanding of reality." (p. 122) Another important input into the new direction of Soviet Indology which Oldenburg's experience and expertise developed, was the radical change in the nationalities policy, which would change the basic principles of Oriental Studies. This meant more attention to social and economic problems and class structure and modern and contemporary history, to help in the full development of all nationalities. In the 1920-30 period there was a great expansion of the scope of Indology, influenced by the needs and the character of the Revolution.

This innovatory approach was represented in the work of Shcherbatskoy, who collaborated with leading scientists in India. His ideas clearly worked in the direction that although Indian culture was original and specific, it should be compared typologically with Graeco-Roman, not only to show a resemblance, but to attract special attention to Ancient India, which had been given insufficient attention by Western scholars. His work on the Buddhist use of logic and dialectics opposed the Western theory that in India logic was borrowed from the Greeks, and Shcherbatskoy showed how it was an entirely original product, which developed in the natural course of Buddhism's ideological debates with Brahminism. Many scholars at that time had shared Hegel's view that oriental philosophy should be excluded from the history of philosophy, since philosophical recognition could not take place. Shcherbatskoy saw at the base of the struggle of different trends in Indian philosophy, not only the opposition of diverse conceptions but also the clash of social groups, the people who were the bearers of these ideas. Another important theme was that all schools of philosophy reflected the opposition of two basic trends—the realistic and the idealistic. It is Shcherbatskoy who paid special attention to the study of materialist trends in Indian philosophy. (p. 130)

The purpose of his research was to introduce the skills of Indian logicians into the practice of contemporary education, in the same way that Plato and Aristotle were studied. This approach neither wished to contrast Eastern and Western culture, nor to draw them closer, artificially. As a result, his study of Buddhism disclosed the achievements of India over 10 centuries when Indian science, literature and technology attained unprecedented heights. His interpretation of the concept of *Dharma* and *Nirvana* showed that Buddhism was a constantly changing doctrine, frequently containing within the same framework, opposite categories and ideas. He firmly opposed a mystical interpretation of Buddhism, since he felt that no scientific philosophy could be necessarily subject to it. (p. 137)

He proved by his unique method that Buddhist logic is logic, but it is not Aristotlean. That it is epistemological, but not Kantian. (p. 139).

Once the Marxist base of Oriental studies was established on the understanding that the oppressed people of Asia were the natural allies of the class conscious workers of Europe, new trends in Soviet Indology began to lead not only European scholarship but also national schools in Asian countries (p. 148)

The first task was to overcome the shortcomings of the research of the thirties, which had not given proper attention to social and economic problems, or even contemporary problems of culture. There was still a tendency to idealize. By this time, the idea of a special path of development (The Asiatic Mode) was debated, but mistakenly approximated with the pattern of European development, with a stress on the slave owning mode of production. However, in the forties and the fifties the work of Osipov Suleikin and Ilyin concentrated on the problems of periodisation and the specific conclusions drawn by Indian historians. The race (Aryan) theory of the Varna system was rejected and the question of slavery was put into a socio economic context. (p. 157) The work of Soviet historians covered important questions and answered them in the light of evidence from ancient Indian sources and Marx's well-known articles on India.

In the contemporary period, the works of Chanana, Kosambi, R.S. Sharma and S. Jaiswal were referred to in the search for the general laws and specific character of the development of Ancient India, the emergence of classes and the state and social and economic formations. (p. 166) The new areas of study included the Harappan civilisation, archeology and anthropology, the contribution of non-Aryan people, and the significance of the "theory of Aryan conquest" which had been over-played in the West. Research is also being done on the Mauryan period, the Kushana period and the social and economic relations in India at the time. (p. 175).

In this new work the attitude to ancient sources is more painstaking. The problem of the source-language, understanding its concept and terminology is posed. The complexity of the social structure is accepted. There is also a renewed interest in literary criticism, linguistics and philosophy. In this process all the sources that have been collected in the Soviet Union are being published and the institutional structure also constantly reformed to allow the greatest freedom and assistance to scholars, which has been perhaps the most important input into the high quality of the scholarship that this book reports to the general reader. The wide scope of scholarship that is opening up before us does not allow us to ignore the work of those who have, with sincerity and seriousness, attempted to study the world-historical process in our country. The ideas and the materials they have researched should enrich our own efforts at building a scientific school of national studies, and just as the polemics of our scholars have enriched the insights gained by the Soviet school their criticism of our work will

help to develop sharper theoretical formulation as well as a more rigorous research and generalisation. What is remarkable is the quantum of work, the development of a proper methodology and its systematic application to the culture of India. What is disheartening is that such a book is generally by-passed, and such scholarship is generally ignored.

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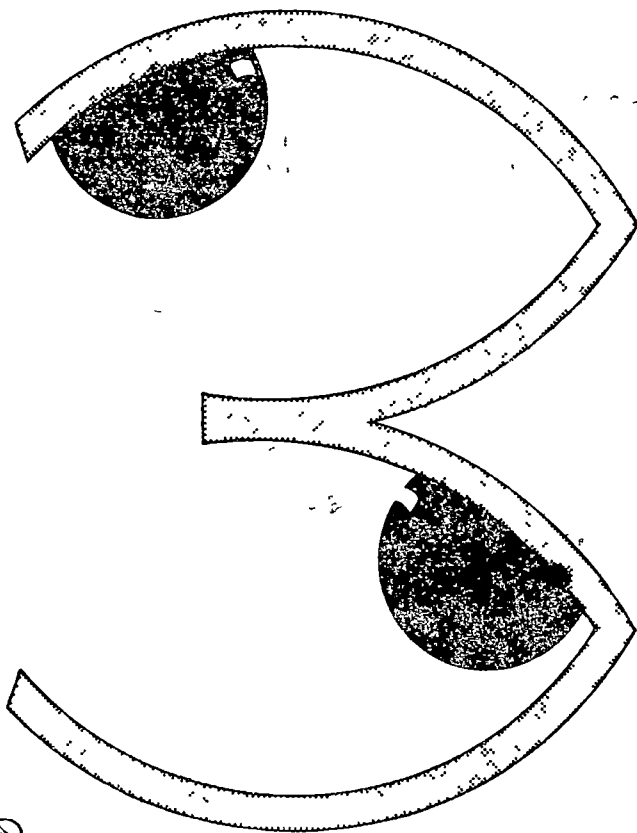
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